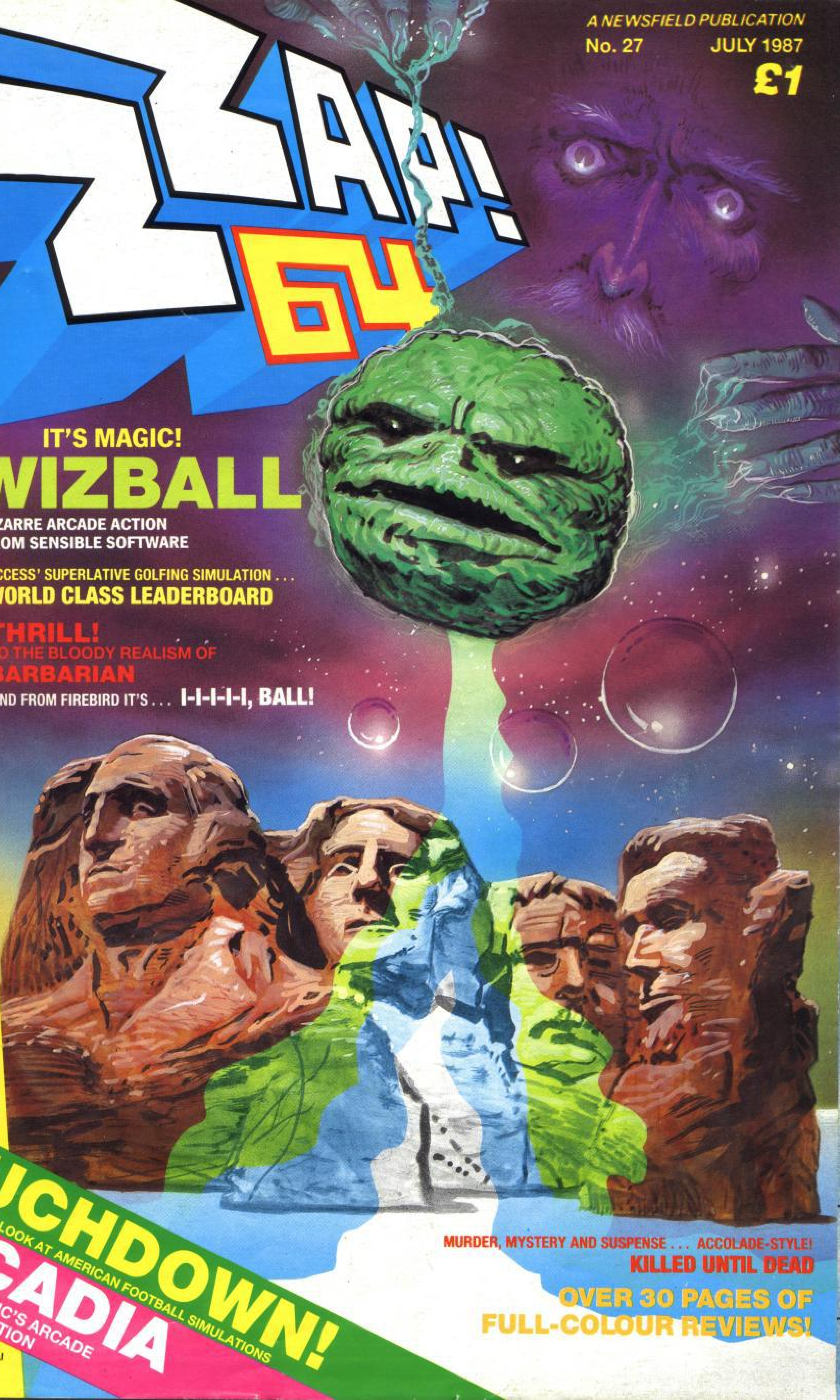
A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION

No. 27 JULY 1987

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MONTHLY REVIEW FOR COMMODORE SOFTWARE



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☎ 0584 5851
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Advertising Information & Bookings
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Printed in England by Carlisle Web Offset (Member of the BPCC Group), Newtown Trading Estate, Carlisle, Cumbria.
Colour Origination by Scan Studios, Wallace Road, London N1

Distributed by COMAG, Tavistock Road, West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 7QE

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION

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RAUNCHY REGULARS

FREAKY FEATURES

HOT STUFF FOR JULY

COMPETITIONS

The next issue of ZZAP! goes on sale from the 9th of July – buy it, or expect a visit from the Spanish Inquisiti . . . "NOBODY expects the Spanish Inquisition! Our key weapon is fear – fear and surprise! Ah – our TWO key weapons are fear, surprise and ruthlessness . . . " Okay, we get the idea – but do you?

JAPAN has a word for the



CLU CLU LAND The evil Sea Urchin has hidden the gold in an underground mystery maze.

BASEBALL It's the most realistic baseball game outside of a ballpark!

HOGAN'S ALLEY Use your Zapper light gun to shoot the gangsters.

DUCK HUNT There's a duck in the air! You've only got three shots to bag this duck. And if you miss, even your dog laughs at you in this fast-action Zapper Gun game.

GYROMITE You've got to keep R.O.B.'s gyroscope spinning to help a mad scientist de-activate the dynamite in his laboratory in order to play this action-packed game!

GOLF Choose your clubs. Control your swings. Select the angle of every shot. It's Nintendo GOLF and there's not a video golf game on par with it anywhere!

For the first time in the UK direct from Japan comes Nintendo, the home entertainment system with genuine arcade-quality graphics. Nintendo make 2 out of 3 of all the world's coin-op arcade machines, so they know what they're doing. And already, in Japan 9½ million homes have a Nintendo home entertainment system.

Now you can enjoy the amazing 52 colour 3-D graphics of Nintendo. (On most home computers, you've been lucky to get 16 colours until now!) Nintendo's superb graphics give the games a convincing true 3-D feel with actual shadows which add depth to the characters.

Already there are 27 Nintendo Game Paks available in the UK and more are being added to the software library all the time. But there's even more to Nintendo than the best games you've ever seen...

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Never before has there been a video gun of this calibre. The astonishing light sensitive Zapper Gun lets you shoot moving targets with pinpoint accuracy from up to 16 feet! If you think you're a sharp shooter the Zapper Gun will test your skill to the full.

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ZZAP! ED

GUARANTEED TO RAISE A SMILE

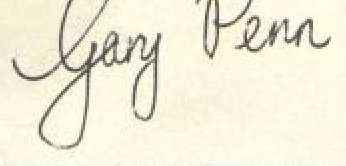
IT WAS recently reported in Computer Trade Weekly – the software industry's major trade newspaper – that software prices may tumble to £5.95 before Christmas. Software Projects announced last month that they are dropping their prices to £5.95 – but will the rest of the market follow suit? Is this really good news?

It's possible that a drop may provoke a decline in quality, especially when you consider how much money and development time goes into many full-priced products. Less profit will be made, so development costs will have to decrease – will the quality of future products therefore decline in a similar fashion?

Such a decrease should also serve to reduce the number of tie-ins, as it would prove difficult (or almost impossible) to recoup the cost of buying a licence when selling a product for £5.95. This is probably a Good Thing, as the quality of licensed software has rarely been high enough to justify the increased price. There again, the £9.95 price tag may well be used solely for licensed software and arcade conversions. We shall just have to wait and see.

This month Ciarán Brennan moves up (or down?) the ranks as he becomes ZZAP!'s Assistant Editor – and apart from reading through Julian, Steve and Paul's scribblings, he provides a few helpful comments.

And next month sees the return of pork-boy himself – Gary Liddon (gasp). The techno tea-boy returns with his 'bit in the middle', and will once again be reviewing all things technical and providing useful hints and tips. We'll also have reviews of Ocean's *Head Over Heels*, Mastertronic's *Milk Race*, US Gold's *Metrocross*, Gremlin Graphics' *Thing Bounces Back*, Palace Software's *Stifflip And Co*, Ariolasoft's *Challenge Of The Gobots*, and Imagine's *Mag Max* – amongst other things. So be there, or be somewhere else . . .







DIY LAYOUT – PART TWO

In the mad rush to get ZZAP! to the printers on time, the film-planning department neglected to slap down the ratings for *Vampire*. So, here it is . . . the missing ratings box for the *Vampire* review. Cut it out and stick it down – and there you have it!

PRESENTATION 65%
A few useful features, but otherwise bland.

GRAPHICS 33%
Simplistic backdrops and single colour sprites.

SOUND 48%
Little more than an unimpressive David Whittaker tune.

HOOKABILITY 41%
Any compulsion to explore and progress is offset by the annoying control, and the fact that it's easy to die.

LASTABILITY 31%
Ninety-five screens to conquer, but nothing particularly interesting to see or do.

VALUE 45%
A relatively cheap thrill, but hardly worth going out of your way for.

OVERALL 34%
Archaic and unrewarding platform action.

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

GAMES REVIEWED

ZZAP! 64 BACKNUMBERS

ZZAP! Backnumbers. All those ageing issues of your favourite Commodore magazine. There's something for everyone – from connoisseur to casual consumer. Here's a quick look at what you're missing . . .

No 4 August 1985

No 5 September 1985

No 8 December 1985

No 9 Christmas Special 1985/86
172 Pork-Free Pages! Amazing FREE Double Sided Oli Frey A2 Poster! Ballblazer Gold Medal! THREE Splendid Sizzlers! Koronis Rift! Robin Of The Wood! Temple Of Aphsai Trilogy! Advanced Music System! Uridium Preview! SIX Pages Of Triumphant Tips! Underwurlde Map Part II Archer Maclean AND Jeff Minter Interviewed! US Gold Previews! Rockford's Round-Up! ALL Is Revealed – Inside ZZAP! Towers! Short Story By 2000 AD's Kelvin Gosnell! Oli Frey Profile! 2000 AD Speak! Terminal Man! And Even More!

No 10 February 1986
116 Perspicuous Pages! Bounder AND Eidolon Gold Medals! TWO Super Sizzlers! Fight Night! Revs! Deus Ex Machina! Tony Crowther AND Martin Galway Interviewed! SIX Pages of Touching Tips! Dynamite Dan Map! Underwurlde Map Part II! Incredible Pictures In The Compunet Art Gallery! Shadowspiel! Lucasfilm Interview Part I! Terminal Man! And More!

No 12 April 1986
116 Practical Paper Pages! 'Julian Rignall' On The Cover! NO Gold Medal! THREE Sizzling Sizzlers! Zoids! Biggles Preview! Game Killer! Programmer's Egos Abound – ZZAP! Superstar Challenge! FIVE Pages Of Transcendental Tips! First Four Levels Of The Eidolon Mapped! 1985 ZZAP! Readers Awards Results! Mindsmear Preview! Wild Sounds From Your 64 – Datel Digidrum AND Sound Sampler Reviewed! ZZAPBACK! Shadowspiel! More Fabulous Compunet Art! Terminal Man! And More!

No 13 May 1986
116 Prolific Pages! Alter Ego Gold Medal! TWO Sharp Sizzlers! Thrust! Super Bowl! Picture Of The Gorgeous Claire Hirsch! The Daily Llama – Diary Of A Minter! Infocom Interview Part II ZZAP In-House Challenge Guest Starring Jeff Minter! SEVEN Pages Of Tryptychesque Tips! Chimera AND Bounder Maps! Palace Software Previews! Shadowspiel! Mindsmear Confession! ZZAPBACK!! Imagine Interview! Index For Issues 1-12! Terminal Man! And More! More! More!

No 14 June 1986
124 Psychedelic Pages! Spindizzy Gold Medal! SIX Saucy Sizzlers! International Karate! Cauldron II! Starquake! Spellbound! ZZAP!TIONAIRE Results! Infocom Interview Part III Steve Evans Interview! EIGHT Pages Of Terrestrial Tips! Doomdark's Revenge Map! Last Four Levels Of The Eidolon Mapped! Shadowspiel! Gary Liddon's Technical Bit In The Middle! Rignall Loses Challenge! ZZAPBACK!! Terminal Man! And More!

No 15 July 1986
124 Profound Pages! Leader Board Gold Medal! FOUR Sublime Sizzlers! Boulderdash III! Slamball! Go For Gold! Sentinel! Budget Reviews Bonanza! Penn Wins Challenge! Euromax's Mouse And Cheese! SIX Pages Of Tender Tips! Starquake Map! More Outstanding Compunet Art! Daily Llama – Minter Diary! Gary Liddon's Technical Bit In The Middle! Shadowspiel! CRL Previews! Terminal Man! And More!

No 16 August 1986
116 Pompous Pages! NO Gold Medal! FOUR Stupendous Sizzlers! Green Beret! Tau Ceti! Infiltrator! Kik Start II! Controversial Musician's Ball Interview! Vidcom Art Package Reviewed! Penn Wins ANOTHER Challenge! Daily Llama – Minter Diary! NINE Pages Of Tasty Tips! Cauldron II Map! Hacker Map! Mercenary Map AND Tips! ZZAPBACK! Terminal Man – Final Episode! And Even More!

No 17 September 1986
124 Paginated Pages! Roger Kean Leaves ZZAP! TWO Gold Medals! Ghosts 'n' Goblins! Graphic Adventure Creator! FIVE Sensuous Sizzlers! Knight Games! Arac! The Second City! Hercules! Split Personalities! The Musician's Other Ball – Commodore's Music Expansion System Reviewed! Penn Loses Challenge! Daily Llama – Conclusion Of The Minter Dairy! SEVEN Pages Of Topical Tips! Ark Pandora Map AND Solution! RMS Titanic Map! Masterblaster III! Software Cuties Special! Uchi Mata Preview! ZZAPSTICK! Chris Butler Interviewed! ZZAPBACK! And More!

No 18 October 1986
116 Powerful Pages! Gary Penn Appointed Editor! NO Gold Medal! FIVE Sexy Sizzlers! Beyond The Forbidden Forest! Powerplay! Parallax! Iridis Alpha! Super Cycle! Two Readers Battle In The Challenge! Greg Barnett Interviewed! NINE Pages Of Titilating Tips! Tau Ceti Map AND Tips! Second City Map AND Tips! And More! More! More!

No 19 November 1986
148 Pretty Pages! World Games Gold Medal! FIVE Spiffing Sizzlers! Dan Dare! Sanxion! Tass Times In Tone Town! Trivial Pursuit! Delta Four Interview! ZZAPSTICK! TEN Pages Of Terrific Tips! Miami Vice Map! First Four Levels Of Equinox Mapped! Robin Of The Wood Map! John Twiddy Interview! ZZAPBACK! And (Believe It Or Not) MORE!

No 20 December 1986
180 Prestigeous Pages! TWO Gold Medals! The Sentinel! Boulderdash Construction Kit! FIVE Superb Sizzlers! Sacred Armour Of Antiriad! Leather Goddesses Of Phobos! Bobby Bearing! The Pawn! Trailblazer! Firebird's Fabulous Microrhythm Drum Kit Reviewed! TWELVE Pages Of Top-Hole Tips! Jack The Nipper Map! Zoids Map! Dan Dare Map! Antiriad Map! And More! More! More!

No 21 Christmas Special 1986/87
196 Promiscuous Pages! NO Gold Medal! ONE Scrumptious Sizzler! The Bard's Tale! The ZZAP! Lads! Denton Designs Revisited! Desert Island 5¼'s! Rockford's Round-Up! Tamara Knight – Part One! Newsfield Reviewer's Challenge! Masterblaster IV! ELEVEN Pages Of Thrilling Tips! Glider Rider Map! Druid Map! Hacker II Map! Infiltrator Tips AND Maps! Fabulous Pull-Out 1987 Calendar! Compunet – Partyline Parody! More Glorious Binary Pictures In The Art Gallery! Tamara Knight – Part Two! ZZAP! Scrapbook! Page 202! And More!

No 22 February 1987
132 Powerful Pages! Over FIFTY Pages of Reviews! NO Gold Medal! FIVE Stunning Sizzlers! Gauntlet! Moonmist! Escape From Singe's Castle! They Stole A Million! Tamara Knight – Part Three! SEVEN Pages Of Triumphant Tips! Flash Gordon Map! Last Four Levels Of Equinox Mapped! Mercenary: The Second City – THE Cheat! Infodroid Map! Kele-Line Profile! And Much Much More!

No 23 March 1987
116 Plague-Free Pages! NO Gold Medal! TWO Sweaty Sizzlers! Mutants! Brian Clough's Football Fortunes! TWO Powerful Pages Of Hard-Hitting Editorial! Portal 'Review'! Sensible Software Interviewed! TWELVE Pages Of Taxing Tips! Camelot Warriors Map! Firelord Map! Avenger Map! Fist II Map! Dante's Inferno Map! Tamara Knight – Part Four! 1986 ZZAP! Reader's Awards Results! The Andrew Braybrook Diary – Mental Procreation Part One! And (Gasp) MORE!

No 24 April 1987
116 Packed Pages! NO Gold Medal! ONE Steaming Sizzler! Gunship! SIX Pages of Coin-Op Reviews! ELEVEN Pages Of Tasty Tips! Tarzan Map! DIY 3D Escape From Singe's Castle Map! Nosferatu Map! Aliens Map! Future Knight Map – Part One! Tamara Knight – Part Five! Mental Procreation – Part Two! And A Whole Lot More!

No 25 May 1987
116 Perfect Pages! An Almost Full-Colour Issue! NO Gold Medal! TWO Sizzling Sizzlers! Into The Eagle's Nest! Hollywood Hijinx! PLUS! Ranarama! Nemesis! Shockway Rider! POO! Sailing! Crucial Compilations Comparison! Tamara Knight – Part Six! Mental Procreation – Part Three! SIX Pages Of Tremendous Tips! Future Knight Map – Part Two! Fantastic Oli Frey Pull-Out Poster! Impossible Mission Past Blaster! Stifflip And Co Preview! Terminal Man II Prologue! Index For Issues 13-24! And (Surprise Surprise) Even More!









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DON'T MISS OUT!

ZZAP! RRAP

Trends in the software industry over this last twelve months have been a constant source of letters to Rrap. I don't think there's another market area to compare with the enthusiasm games software generates among its adherents (not even music, where the public are concerned about what they listen to, but not so much about how it's produced). One subject not much touched on, but one I think is becoming an alarming trend, is neatly laid bare by this month's prize winning letter . . .

COMPILED OUT OF BUSINESS

Dear Lloyd,
I'm annoyed that new software is released at full price, and then a few months later appears on a compilation. For example, Elite brought out *Scooby Doo* just before Christmas. Two months later, it appeared on the *Six Pack* compilation.

Compilations are all very well if you haven't got the games, but I feel sorry for people who bought *Scooby Doo* first time round. If they had waited two months later, they could have got five more games plus the free game for the same price – they must be very angry. Three of the other games in the *Six Pack* – *Split Personalities*, *1942* and *Antiriad* – are also too new to be put on a compilation.

Which brings me to Palace Software . . . so far, they've released three games, (excepting *Barbarian*) *Antiriad* and *Cauldron I* and *II*. All are available on compilations, which means that *Barbarian* probably won't sell as well as it could because people will wait until it appears on a compilation. It's fine releasing such compilations as *Yak's Progress*, because the games are old enough to appear on compilations.

Putting new games like *Scooby Doo, Antiriad, Dandy and 1942* on compilations can only damage the software industry. It may make compilations sell a lot more for companies like Beau Jolly, but the main software market is in single selling.

Brian Wheeler, Leicestershire

And I couldn't agree more with you! I know the argument is that this happens in the music industry (you can buy a Now Music for the price of a couple of singles and get, what, 20 recent hits. But we're talking there of a vastly bigger business. I have to say (and I'll probably get rrapped over the knuckles for it) that I think it's shockingly short sighted of major software houses, working in the full price range, to undercut their own product, and their credibility, by re-releasing compilations too soon. Surely this is no sensible way to combat the threat of budget titles?

Thanks for your letter, Brian, your £30 worth of software (compiled to your choice) will be on its way as soon as you let us know.

LM

BLOWN HOT AND COLD

Dear ZZAP!
I would like to say a big Thank You to you and Incentive Software. I recently won the Hot/Cold Competition special, which by the way, I thought was great.

I was presented with the £600 cheque on Saturday 21 February at Minerva House (Incentive Headquarters). Ian Andrew and the rest of the Incentive team were very pleasant. It was really great to see round their new HQ. It's a computer person's paradise.

I'm going on a skiing holiday in Bulgaria with the money which will be great!

Mark Watkins, Amersham, Bucks

Take care when you're out on the piste, Mark, and bring both legs back with you!

LM

RIPPED OUT

Dear ZZAP!
I'm writing to complain about the recent poster in issue 25. As I tried to pull the poster out of the centre pages (very gently of course), I found that it was stuck to the other pages. After a long struggle I successfully pulled it out, ahem! Or might I say ripped! it out, I tried frantically to sellotape it together and by the time I'd finished it wasn't fit to hang up in the dog-kennel. Please find (ripped) poster enclosed.

Matthew Dousling, Preston

Yes, that was a bit of a shock. Unbeknown to our Production Department, our printers decided to add glue to the magazine's spine in response to our complaints (from yourselves) that the staples never held it together. Unfortunately, when they did it, they didn't realise that the glue was being run well off centre. I'm afraid there was nothing we could do about it apart from cry. Sometimes these things are sent to try us all.

LM

ARCADE APPRECIATION

Dear Lloyd,
I would like to compliment you on your arcade section in Issue 24. An amazing six pages of your magazine devoted to the latest action from the arcades. The 14 colour screen shots and four black and white ones were fantastic and the reviews were highly enjoyable to read, making the article the best six pages of ZZAP!. One thing, though. I was disappointed not to see my favourite arcade game there – *Gauntlet II*.

Paul Cashley, Bishopston, Bristol

Blackpool may never be the same again! Sorry about missing out your favourite Paul, but in the view of the 'judges' Gauntlet II *was thought to be 'too old' to include (meaning it may6 have upset their street-cred).*

LM



DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER

Dear Lloyd,
You asked me what I have to say to my critics. Well, here I go again.

In answer to Mike Thomas, I'm sorry my rantings made him sick (if I had his address I would send him a 'get well' card). As you say at the end of his letter this is what ZZAP! is all about, a chance for all to have their say. I had mine, and I knew before writing I would upset some poor sensitive creatures. I can assure you Mike, I'm not a complete idiot. I do read ZZAP! and I do own a Commodore 64 (oh and a 1541 disk drive, thanks to winning a ZZAP! competition last year).

I still stand by my comment in my letter about the ratings for all the games I mentioned, and *Destroyer* is to receive a low rating because it's a disk based game. I realise most ZZAP! readers are C2N owners as Mike seems to be, but to say a game is to be rated low because it is disk based? And I'm the 'complete idiot'!

His next comment really made me laugh. Okay, the ZZAP! team have been reviewing games for a few years now, but I'll bet there are hundreds if not thousands of ex-VIC 20 and 64 owners who have been playing games longer than the ZZAP! team. The point I was trying to make is anyone who has been playing games on computers for the past four or five years, will have more experience than some of the ZZAP! crew, and would probably be able to give as good an opinion as any of the present reviewers.

As for myself I am no silly young lad, I am somewhat mature and do realise that ZZAP! is aimed at the younger reader. However, as ZZAP! claims to be the leading *review* magazine (look at any front cover), I expect to see plenty of reviews (which the Christmas edition didn't have). There are tips in every edition of ZZAP!, if I wanted to read sci-fi series, I would buy sci-fi mags (Tamara Knight is a waste of reviewing space as far as I am concerned), if I want comic strips I'll buy Beano or Dandy.

Now for Stephen Fenton: Read Lloyd's comment to Mike Thomas! We all have our own opinions on different subjects, as for the ZZAP! team's experience . . . I've already commented on that.

If you listen to Queen's version of *It's a Kind of Magic* and then listen to Martin Galway's version, considering there isn't a musical instrument in sight, I thought the sound Martin Galway achieved was brilliant. If I didn't know better, I'd have said it was Brian May on the Galway version, if Freddie Mercury was singing along it would pass for a Queen track!

I don't think Paul Sumner will be losing sleep over my comments, I'll bet they seem pretty tame, to some things he's been called in the past.

I would also like to tell Stephen that I have just finished a course, and the rest of the group on the course were invited to write comments on everyone else; you may be surprised that everyone in the group thought I was a nice person to know and also very tolerant and willing to listen to others points of view.

I've said I thought ZZAP! was on the decline and to substantiate my point I bought my May edition yesterday (April 23rd) in my local newsagent, two weeks after it went on sale, and there were still dozens on the shelf. This time a year ago, if I wasn't in the shop on the day ZZAP! went on sale, I had no chance of getting a copy. Now I can get one any time. Further to this, in the past three or four months the newsagent has been holding back other magazines such as C&VG, Commodore User and others for the simple reason (I got it from the sales person responsible for the stocking of the magazine section) they are trying to get people to buy ZZAP!

To conclude I'm just an ordinary guy who is sincere and speaks his mind! For those who find criticism rude or offensive, if you can't stand the heat get out of the kitchen.

Jack Diamond, Ayrshire

There's just a couple of points I'll take up, Jack. Firstly you imply that ZZAP! reviewers' experience doesn't extend to before the start of the magazine. This isn't correct – Julian had an Atari and Gary was a VIC 20 owner. Gary got his when it came out, and reckons he was a fifth former at school, some five and a half years ago. Both did pieces for other magazines before ZZAP! was launched.

The other point is your last. I simply cannot believe your local newsagent actually 'holds back' other magazines in order to push ZZAP! Whoever told you this was either lying, misunderstood what you were asking, or you misunderstood their answer. Not only would they be damaging their own profit potential, they would actually be breaking the code of conduct imposed on them by their federation rules. Newsagents do not hold back titles that sell well. Currently, ZZAP's newstrade order is rising every month, perhaps that's why there are more of them than other magazines in your newsagent; and why there have been more left over recently, because a rising circulation magazine is always having to find its real sales level.

LM

A PLEA FOR A POKE

Dear ZZAP!
Please, please, please print this letter. Why? Simply because I have a copy of *The Double* by Scanatron and I was wondering if your readers could find a POKE which would enable you to see only the result of your match (not all of the other matches). Also could someone find a POKE which gets rid of all the gate attendances as well?

G Gunning, Dorchester, Dorset

Mr Gunning, you're not the only one to be seeking unusual POKEs, in fact Julian is besieged by such letters. Sorry we can't answer your prayers instantly, but if anyone does know of unusual, daft, amaze-your-family-and-friends POKEs tucked up their sleeves, let Julian know.

LM

SOME WORDS OF WISDOM

Dear ZZAP!
Firstly a word on software piracy. Like many of my friends I'm guilty of this crime – I don't copy a great deal of games but it's still wrong.

Most of today's games are unoriginal, following tired themes and are not worth the price of a blank tape. Obviously some games are good, and worth copying, but they're few in number.

However, besides copying a couple of games each month I also buy a couple of £10 games, and occasionally some budget games. The amount of money going into the industry from these sales seems enough to balance the occasional copy of a game not worth its price tag. Incidentally, over 75 percent of my games collection is original.

I believe that £10 is an extortionate price for a game, but I don't believe lowering the price tag to £5 will reduce piracy to any great extent. People would still prefer to copy a game than spend £5, and any further price drop would jeopardise software quality. No matter the price, there will always be piracy and I cannot see a feasible solution.

Now on to another controversial subject, the ZZAP! vs Commodore User argument. I receive ZZAP! every month and get CU occasionally. It seems to me that the latter has some sort of inferiority complex, because every month its letter pages are full of how great CU is and what rubbish ZZAP! is. CU does have its good points (for example – their news pages are better than ZZAP!'s) but to compare the two is impossible. The style of the two magazines is totally different and they cater for different tastes. ZZAP! is primarily a software review magazine, but CU contains programming, hardware and utility reviews, and approximately 30 percent is dedicated to the C16. Which of the magazines you buy is all down to taste.

Yet another controversial subject is that of arcade clones, tie-ins and licences. Many people complain about the quality of these games – indeed many are awful, but many original games are also badly implemented. You can't blame software houses for using licensed characters. They're in business to make a profit, and with big character-name games they're assured of making that profit. If you don't like the games don't buy them, and then perhaps software houses will start producing original games once more.

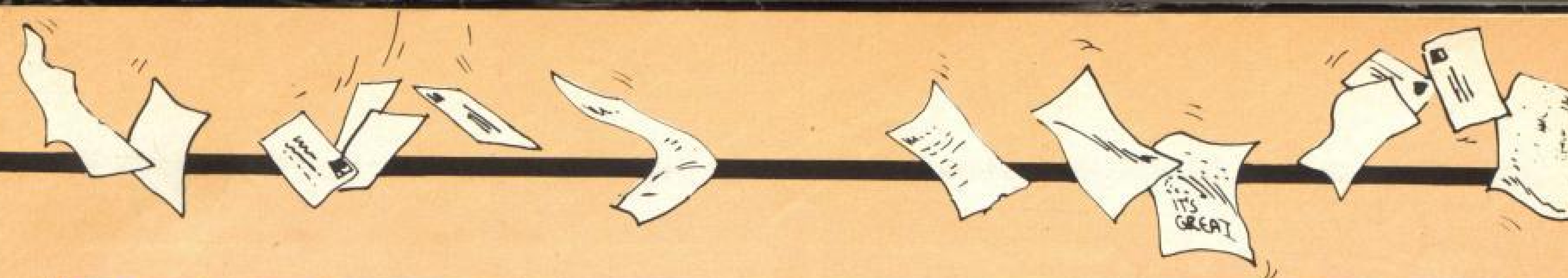
Finally a word to Jack Diamond. As one of the (as you put it) people who matter, I would like to tell you what I think of your idea. Stupid, pathetic, unpractical (need I go on?). And as for calling the ZZAP! lads 'ego-maniacs', Mr Diamond! I wonder who you had in mind as a possible candidate when you suggested that the public reviewed the games on offer each month?

R Hales, Cheshire

I heard a point of view from a software retailer the other day, that I've never heard before: namely that the software business and piracy have a symbiotic relationship. Crudely, symbiosis is a state where one creature lives off another without doing its host any harm, and in return does its host favours. Here the argument was that it is the fact that you can copy games so readily, thus achieving sizeable collections, that makes the hardware popular, thus in turn generating a need for more software that otherwise would dwindle away. I don't know whether it's true, but it is an interesting theory.

As for Mr Jack Diamond, I don't need to comment further, because here he is . . .

LM



A GREAT DANE'S BARK . . .

Dear Lloyd,
Before you read on I want to inform you that you may well find this letter a bit rude. If it is so, I will already now make an apology, but I felt that the letter had to be strong, and unfortunately my English isn't so good that I can make a letter both strong and polite.

I would like to thank you for printing my letter in ZZAP! Issue 22, I will return to your answers later, but first I will make a request to ZZAP!

You have started a Music Top Ten; well, it isn't a bad idea, but I don't see the point. I cannot believe that anyone will buy a game only because of the music, so why not make an Adventure/Strategy Top Ten instead of a rather unimportant music Top Ten, or even better, two separate charts, one for adventures and one for strategy games.

There are very few games in these genre which have been in your chart and therefore the readers have only your tests as a guide. Just as an example of what can happen I mention *Battle Of Midway*. This game was voted second best wargame of 1985, but ZZAP! only gave it an overall rating of 51%.

And now a response to some of the answers you gave me to my last letter.

When I read your reply to SPLIT REVIEWS, my respect for you went downhill quite a lot – '. . . more pictures means less text,' you said; what kind of an answer is that? Well, it's certainly the easiest way to get around the problem. I've written four points down, I would like you to think about them before you give me another answer which I hopefully can accept.

Nobody has told you the size of the pictures, so if you think that a review is worth, for instance, five pictures, then cut the size down. Doing that gives two positive factors – more space for text – the pictures look better when they're small.

Why put six to eight pictures in one review? Especially when they basically show the same subject. Just take a look at *Gauntlet* – six pictures, of which four show the dungeons and two of them fill half a page – what a waste of space. You could have put a bit more work into the tests you have given a Sizzler rating, instead of giving us one-third (out of three) of a page of text.

In your answer to the letter of the month (Issue 14), you told us that the reviews and not the ratings are the key to our decision about whether a game is good or bad. I feel it has been harder recently to place good and bad games, as we have got less text to do it from.

It is true that nearly 75 percent of your readers would have more pictures (found in your two ZZAP!tionnaires), but have you realised that only five percent wants less detail in your reviews. And that is what you have given them.

Then I have some suggestions to improvements for your readers awards. Let me make one thing clear, the list is miles better than last year's, but I still think it can be improved.

First, why haven't you made it possible to vote for the best beat 'em up game. (This should also contain scrolling beat 'em up, boxing and wrestling games). It seems like this genre is going to be a classic like platform games. You could argue that these games are sports simulations, but everyone I know thinks of them as beat' em up games, and even ZZAP! doesn't call them anything else.

Second, I think it would be very popular among your readers if it also was possible to vote for best Playability. And finally, does Best Simulation mean sports simulation, flight simulation or both? Why haven't you specified this the same way as last year.

And now I will ask you Lloyd, are you a gentleman? Well, maybe you are, but then show it.

First a gentleman simply does not point out the mistakes his opponents make. The way you criticised Commodore User (Issue 22, page 12) is beneath contempt for a gentleman. You explained the strong points of your magazine compared to CU, and it would have been a great answer if you left it that way. But it looks like you have to knock out your competitor without giving him a chance to defend himself. And even if CU uses the same tactic, it's no excuse for you to use it.

And what about the first passage of your reply. Are you trying to convince people that Mr Anthony Worthing shouldn't have written to ZZAP!, but rather should have addressed his letter to CU, because it's the magazine he feels has the wrong test? No gentleman would intimate such things, especially not when AW has made everything so clear in his letter. You haven't used your brain in replying when he wrote '. . . but I agree with ZZAP! on this one.' Surely this means that he agrees with ZZAP! on *Fist II*, but at the same time he tells you that it is not the case with *Marble Madness*. So use your logic in your replies, as any gentleman will do, instead of answering in a manner which intimates that CU was wrong with both games.

And now, worst of all, your reply to Mr Richard Tatterton (Issue 23, page 10). Where's the answer to the last part of his letter about the lack of Previews? It is indeed an excellent point with a very good argument, so why didn't you give him a reply? This isn't the first time you've forgotten to answer one or two points in a letter – and that a gentleman would always remember.

I think you are a gentleman, but I wish you would be a bit more gentle Mr Gentleman.
Rene B Pedersen, Denmark

Phew! Well, Rene, first may I say you managed wonderfully to be both polite and strong. To your first points: the Music Top Ten – I'll leave that for other readers to mull over. Strategy will be much better catered for now that the very lovely and dangerous Phillipa Irving is driving the tank. Pictures versus Text: we've also received many letters over the months suggesting that the ZZAP! reviews were getting too long-winded, you know. Readers wanted more colour screen shots, so we have arranged that, but there's a technical restriction on their size (otherwise the cost rockets) – that they should be two columns wide or three. True, that doesn't explain why a review should get as many as six shots, and I suspect that over the next issue or two, cost alone will dictate that that doesn't happen very often. But I just don't agree with you that readers are getting less text than they need for a review in ZZAP! to make its points. May be other readers will let me know their views.

I try to be a Gentleman, but it's not always easy! My reply to AW of Sussex is simply a defence of ZZAP's way of doing things. Since he raised the question of comparing ratings (I agree I was wrong to imply he hadn't stated whether he agreed with ZZAP! or CU over Marble Madness*) it seemed only fair to further defend ZZAP! by comparing some ratings mentioned within one issue of CU.*

The last point: I don't always reply to every point in every letter, but I don't always exclude them from being printed either. Often, it's other readers who then answer them – after all, this is your debate as well as mine. And of course I don't formulate ZZAP! editorial policy – that's down to Gary Penn. Currently the magazine is being considerably revamped, bit by bit, and that may well bring its own answer to Richard Tatterton. (Have I just evaded the point? Perhaps, but then, Gentlemen are known to be very good at that too)!

LM

ZZAP! RRap

I LOST ROSCOE'S

Dear Lloyd,
I was interested to read of K Naunton's problem (March 87) concerning the lack of a city map with *The Bard's Tale*. I bought this game at Christmas and was also disappointed that no map was included, although the instruction manual did refer to it a number of times.

However, I spoke to the supplier from whom I purchased the game and he kindly rang Ariolasoft for a copy. Within a few days the map had arrived. I am enclosing a copy of the map should you wish to send it to Mr Naunton or if you can print it within ZZAP! 64.

Henry Olsen, Tyne and Wear

PS Can you tell me where Roscoe's Emporium is located?

No, I can't, but maybe some reader will take pity on your plight and supply the information. Odd about the map, but maybe the package you received just didn't have it included by mistake. When things like that are boxed up, there are always one or two that slip through incomplete.

LM

THE HUBBARD IS NOT BARE

Dear Lloyd,
I would like to congratulate ZZAP! for producing that excellent demo tape last month. It exceeded my expectations and was well worth the extra money (even though I didn't have to pay it 'cos I'm a subscriber see). The playable demo's like *Revenge II* were very enjoyable.

My favourite on the tape though wasn't a game at all but the Rob Hubbard music. This has been blasting out of my stereo ever since I got it. Why don't you have just music demo tapes by Rob attached to ZZAP! now and again? An even better suggestion is for Rob to market his music himself (all done on the synthesisers), it could be very profitable and I'm sure many people would enjoy it. These are only suggestions Rob, I'm not trying to tell you how to run your life.

Talking about people telling other people what to do, I wish readers would stop telling you how to run your mag. How about Adrian Kingsten? Adrian starts his letter 'I think ZZAP! is good, but it could be improved in the following ways . . . Get better reviewers . . . ' and so on. This is no help to you – I don't expect you're going to sack everyone because he thinks they're naff. He even said, 'Pick some better games to review. The games that you had last issue were rubbish . . . ' he obviously thought a lot about what he wrote.

There are so many people who say ZZAP! is going downhill because of the lack of good software, that I wouldn't be surprised if you stopped the mag and gave in. There have been the odd times that I've disagreed with reviews but it doesn't mean I write saying ZZAP! is crap. I don't buy ZZAP! just for the reviews, and nor do most people I know; features like Mental Procreation and Editorial I enjoy very much.

There seems to be a funny attitude where I live, which is if you own a computer you are an unsociable boffin! I agree that if someone sits locked away in their room all day doing nothing but playing computer games, then they aren't very sociable. But people such as myself like a good go on the computer, but we also enjoy sports and go to parties etc.

Will you be going to the next official Commodore Show at Novotel. The last one was only good because ZZAP! were there, my friend and I had a drink with Richard Eddy you know! Do you remember Ricky old mate, oh well maybe not.

One final thing before I go and listen to the free audio Rob Hubbard tape, I hope you bring back the ZZAP! Challenge 'cos that's the only chance I'll get to meet you lot, and I really want to.

Philip Middlewood, Beds

Working backwards Philip, ZZAP! won't, I'm afraid to say, be at this year's Novotel Commodore Show. Instead there will be an even bigger all singin' all dancin' Newsfield stand at the PCW towards the end of September (it's later this year than last), and no doubt you can have another drink with Richard Eddy there. (Watch out for another 'Free Tickets To The PCW Show Competition' soon).

Rob Hubbard: still a bit hush-hush at the moment, but I believe Gary and Rob are up to something . . . More news when the details are sorted out.

LM

OUT OF BONDAGE

Dear Lloyd,
I'd like to thank all of you at ZZAP! Towers for your hospitality when six of us readers were invited to visit your good selves as a substitute for the Basildon Bond (Issue Seven) prize.

It was completely unselfish of you and you weren't obliged to do anything, but you did. This shows how highly you think of your readers. I'm sure I speak for the others too when I say how highly we all think of you.

It's a shame you weren't present Lloyd, but one can't have everything.

Once again, many thanks

Duncan Harvey, Staffs

And thank you Duncan. Perhaps I'd better explain briefly: The Basildon Bond Competition was a minefield in as much as the prize fell through before the magazine went on sale, but after it was printed. The prize winners were to be treated to a day out at the BBC TV studios to attend the recording of a Russ Abbott Show, and to be 'auditioned' for it. One person was to be selected to actually appear in the show. The competition's sponsor hadn't obtained the BBC's full agreement when setting up this competition, and was rather stuck when surprisingly, they refused. Over the many, many months this matter hadn't been sorted out, so in the end we invited as many of the winners as could be contacted for a day out at ZZAP! Towers. Sorry I wasn't present that day, but thanks to Glenys Powell, Julian Rignall and Richard Eddy for making all the arrangements and looking after everyone.

LM

KRACKED OUT

Dear ZZAP!
Do you have something against Gremlin Graphics or is Imagine paying you more money to advertise their games? If you are wondering what I'm talking about dig out Issue 24 and flick through to pages 38 and 39. Here you see *Krakout* and *Arkanoid* being reviewed.

I was shocked when I read about the games. For a start all my friends think that Gremlin's *Krakout* is better than *Arkanoid*, and so do I, but according to ZZAP! it isn't so good. The thing I can't understand is that the games are practically the same but the percentages and remarks are completely different.

Arkanoid got 13 percent more for Hookability – for exactly the same game! The Lastability difference was 18 percent which is very hard to believe. The review mentions that there are 100 screens in *Krakout*, but still says it soon gets monotonous and predictable. *Arkanoid*, it says, lacks variety . . . which is very true because there are hardly any nasties to try and kill you, yet the review says it's very playable and compulsive.

The remark that gets me most of all is the one for Overall. A 25 percent difference in favour of *Arkanoid*. For *Krakout* it says, 'an unremarkable re-working of an out-dated theme', yet *Arkanoid* is a 'well above average conversion of an addictive and challenging arcade game'.

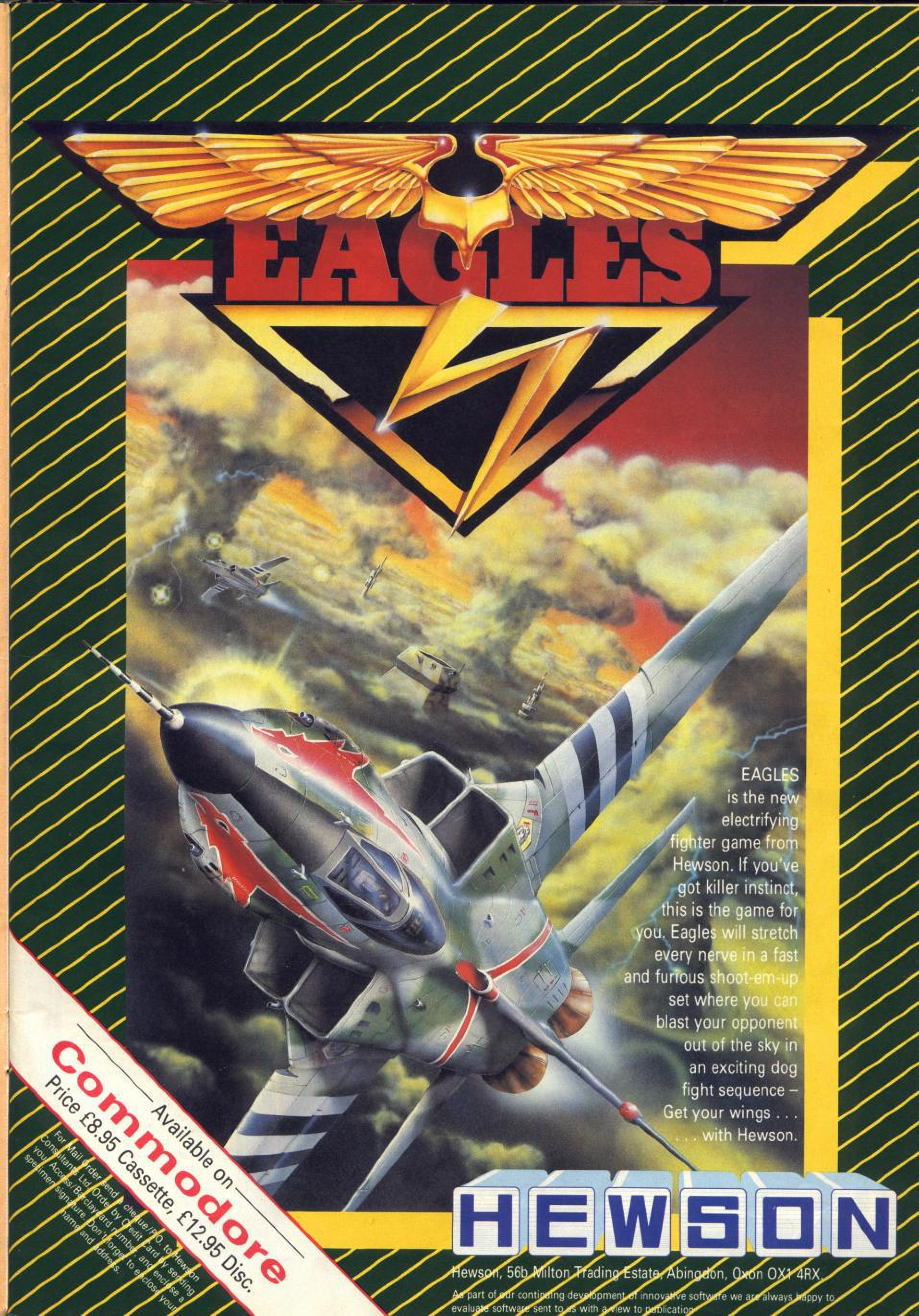
Are the reviewers talking about the same arcade game, or are they just total and utter prats? Was a gun being held to their heads when writing this? Well, they certainly need shooting. I think that the reviewers talk a load of crap in some reviews, but I still like your magazine.

Peter Chambers, Belfast

I've no comment of my own to make Peter – no cop out, I simply haven't played either game on the 64 to have any opinion as to whether I agree with you or with our reviewers. Over to you, dear reader, as they say in all good Victorian novels.

LM

And so, as the sun sets slowly in the west, Lloyd Mangram, Gentleman of Ludlow Parish, sets sail on his bicycle, typewriter strapped to his low-slung hip, to take care of a few troublesome runner bean plants that have been running riot in his absence. A few well-chosen words will take care of them, and ten minutes in a pot of lightly-salted boiling water. Meanwhile, if you have anything to put in a missive to him, write to LLOYD MANGRAM, ZZAP! Rrap, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.


EAGLES
EAGLES is the new electrifying fighter game from Hewson. If you've got killer instinct, this is the game for you. Eagles will stretch every nerve in a fast and furious shoot-em-up set where you can blast your opponent out of the sky in an exciting dog fight sequence – Get your wings . . . . . . with Hewson.
Available on
Commodore
Price £8.95 Cassette, £12.95 Disc.
For Mail Order send a cheque/P.O. to Hewson Consultants Ltd. Order by Credit Card by sending your Access/Barclaycard number, and enclose a specimen signature. Don't forget to enclose your name and address.
HEWSON
Hewson, 56b Milton Trading Estate, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RX.
As part of our continuing development of innovative software we are always happy to evaluate software sent to us with a view to publication.

ZZAP! TEST

WIZBALL

Ocean, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only

● A unique, high quality production from Sensible Software



Wizworld was a peaceful and colourful place – until the evil Zark and his horrible henchsprites drained its life and colour, leaving behind them a grey, drab and generally unhappy world.

Enter our two gallant heroes – Wiz and his cat, Nifta. Together, they alone can restore the lost life, laughter – and more importantly, colour – to this desolate waste.

Wizworld is split into eight levels, stacked on top of each other like a giant sandwich, with Level One at the bottom. To enable the Wiz to move and breathe more easily, he magically shrinks himself and steps inside a highly manoeuvrable ball – the Wizball. The screen scrolls as the Wiz negotiates the landscape in his strange, spherical vehicle.

Only three adjacent incomplete levels can be accessed at any time – thus, Level Four can only be accessed when Level One is complete, Level Five when Level Two is complete and so on. Wiz moves between levels through a series of tubes – arrows half-hidden in the landscape indicating whether the tube leads up or down.

Initially, moving the joystick left or right spins the ball, causing it to bounce when it hits the ground. A pearl appears when a molecule or eight aliens have been shot – collecting this orb highlights an icon at top of screen, and a quick waggle of the joystick adds the highlighted feature to Wiz's armoury.

Zark's sprites inhabit each level, some floating harmlessly, others spewing a deadly hail of bullets. Bubbles of colour also float around, bursting when shot and releasing a droplet of coloured chemical. However, droplets can only be collected by Nifta the Cat, who appears when his corresponding icon has been lit and activated.

Holding down the fire button transfers control to Nifta, allowing him to collect colour droplets and fill the respective mini-cauldron at bottom of screen. Depending on the target colour, a fourth mini-cauldron fills up. Yellow is made by collecting red and green droplets in equal proportions. Orange requires a greater proportion of red – it's worth bearing in mind that equal proportions of red, green and blue make white. However, should the colour mixing prove too overwhelming, you can always simply collect as much of each colour as possible.

Collecting a grey droplet endows the cat with 128 lives, whereas a black droplet makes the scenery go dark – vision is restored by shooting a specified number of aliens. Catching a light



Wizball is undoubtedly the finest release so far this year. The scenario and game design are so original that it's almost off-putting at first, but it only takes a short time to master controlling the Wizball and cat and then to work out exactly what's going on. Playing is a joy, and there's plenty of entertainment for anyone who's willing to attempt colouring in the landscape. The graphics, sound and general presentation are second to none, and combined with the thoughtful attention to detail and the comprehensive series of game variations, you end up with something rather special. Don't delay, go to your software shop and say 'Mr Retailer, swiftly hand me a copy of Wizball **so that I can go home and play it forthwith.'**



▼ **The Wiz meets his demise in a shower of colour, while still on Level One**

- A **THRUST and ANTI-GRAV: provide greater control over the ball**
- B **SLAP WEAPON: pressing the fire button activates beams**
- C **DOUBLE: splits the fire power in both directions**
- D **CATALYTE: holding down the fire button transfers directional control to the cat**
- E **BLAZERS: slightly more powerful firepower**
- F **WIZSPRAY or CATSPRAY: multi-directional firepower for either Wiz or Nifta**
- G **SMART BOMB: destroys all aliens and bullets on screen**
- H **SHIELDS: temporary immunity from aliens and bullets**



SIZZLER

Sensible Software have designed Wizball with the player in mind – it's extremely user-friendly. What I find most impressive though, is that the concept and execution is so tight that there's very little room for improvement. It's a distinctly professional production, its style and content placing it head and shoulders above existing software. The control method is initially awkward, but adds to the playability when mastered. Wizball is simply brilliant – one of the best-presented, most graphically and aurally attractive and addictive pieces of software available.



▲ The Wiz shoots molecules to collect pearls . . . the scene is Level Three, complete with a mini Mount Rushmore

Mixing blue and green to form the third and final target colour – cyan

▼ The first of Level Five's three colours has been replaced



At last, something to enthuse about! Wizball appears like a breath of fresh air to our tired old 64's, being the most polished and well presented game to appear for months. It's fun to play too – difficult mind you, but fun. It's certainly a very individual concept and has loads of neat touches like the 'Filth Raid', the mini Mount Rushmore landscape, the squeal of the cat when he's close to dying, the gorgeous animation when the Wizball appears and . . . I could go on and on. No single aspect has been compromised for the sake of another: the music and sound effects are great, the control is good, the gameplay's structure is excellent, and the entire package is very cleverly designed. Miss this and you're missing the best program of the year.



ZZAP! TEST

WIZBALL

blue droplet results in a 'Filth Raid' – sirens blaring and blue lights flashing, six ships zoom in for the kill. A carelessly consumed purple droplet drives the cat insane, causing him to zip around the screen miaowing with rage until he's killed. The white droplet gives an extra life.

Levels are completed by collecting and mixing the three missing colours, while completing a colour takes the Wizard into a bonus section set in outermost space. Aliens appear in formation, and shooting 255 of them gains an extra life – another extra life is collected halfway through the bonus stage. When the bonus level is complete or the Wiz dies, he enters the Wizlab, where his ball is left at a parking meter, the colour is put into the landscape, and a permanent weapon can be initiated. If Nifta is alive at this point, his nine lives are replenished.

When all three colours have been put back into a landscape, you are treated to a view of your work while bonus points are added to your score. Complete all eight levels and . . . well, that's for you to find out.



Nifta drinks Wizmilk to replenish his nine lives, while the Wiz mixes colours in the Wizlab

Level Two, with all three colours in place



PRESENTATION 98%
Brilliant – flawless if it wasn't for the slightly confusing instructions. Superb attract sequence complete with high-score table and Wiztips, plus restart and pause feature, multi-player and team options, intelligent joystick sensing, a novel control mode and no need to use the keyboard to activate weapons!

GRAPHICS 92%
Attractive backdrops and landscape features, reasonable sprites and good use of colour.

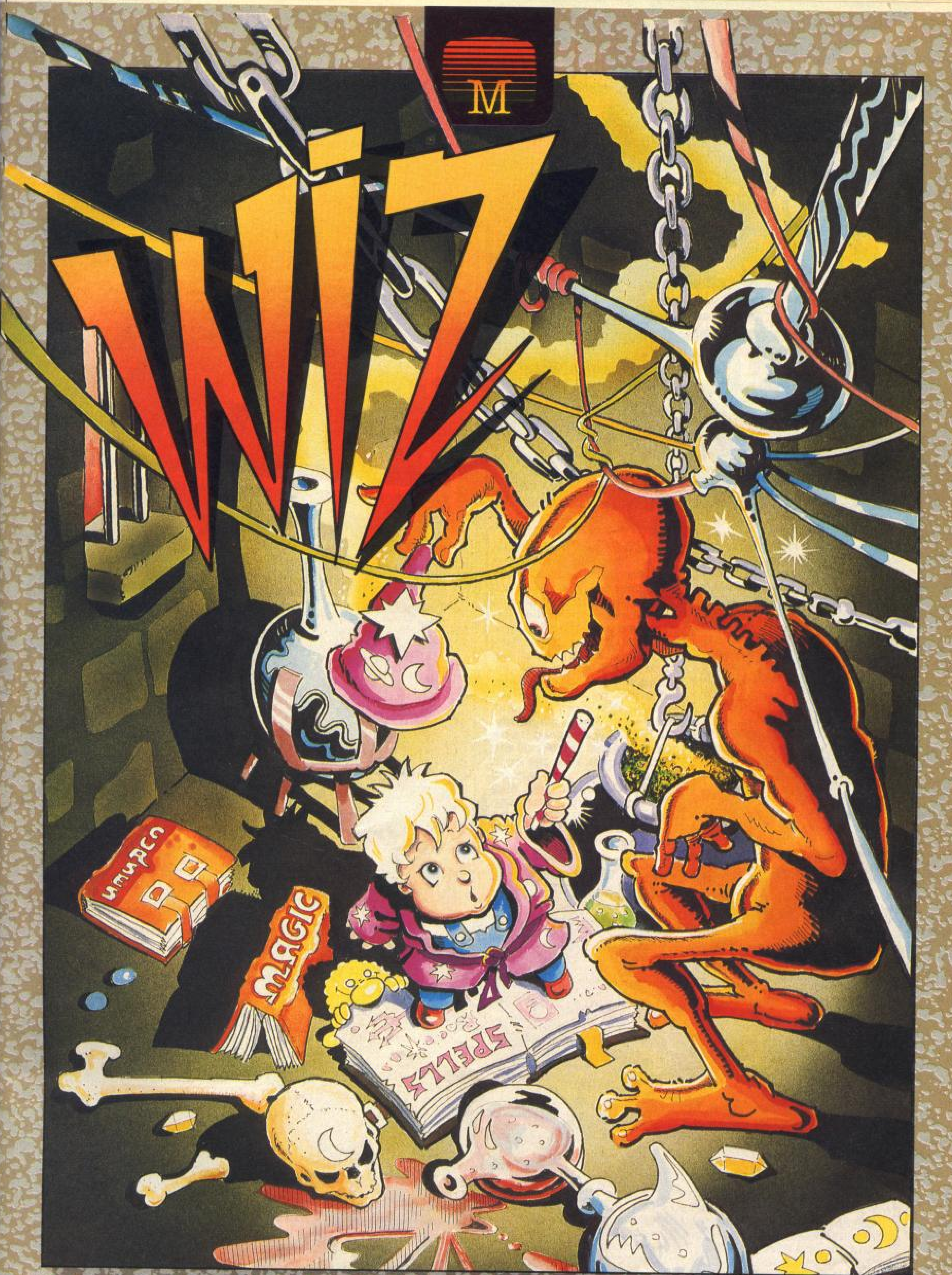
SOUND 96%
Fabulous title tune and jingles, and good spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 81%
Not instantly playable, but highly addictive once the concept and control mode is grasped.

LASTABILITY 92%
Action-packed and compulsive, with eight increasingly difficult landscapes to colour in.

VALUE 95%
An essential purchase.

OVERALL 96%
A superlative piece of software. Slick in virtually every aspect, wholly original and immensely playable.


M
WIZ
MAGIC
SPELLS

ZZAP! TEST

SIZZLER

WORLD CLASS LEADER-BOARD

US Gold/Access, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only

● The definitive golfing simulation, featuring three accurate representations of famous golf courses, plus a special Gauntlet Country Club course – the ultimate challenge!

Commodore 64 owners will need no introduction to the successful series of *Leaderboard* golfing simulations from Access. The recent addition of the *Executive Edition* introduced trees and bunkers to the courses, and now *World Class Leaderboard* completes the series, combining all the features of the previous releases in reproductions of three famous golf courses: St. Andrews, Doral Country Club and Champions Cypress Creek. It also includes a specially designed course, the Gauntlet Country Club, which provides the hardest challenge of all.

The earlier games' control method is retained, whereby the strength of the shot and hook or slice are joystick-controlled – pressing the fire button stops a moving bar at the required moment. A cursor is used to determine the shot's general direction.

The course is displayed as a forced perspective first-person view, re-drawn after each stroke to give the correct viewpoint of the next shot. Trees, rivers, lakes, bunkers, rough and green are incorporated on all four courses, and DIY golfers also have the option to build a course of their own design by taking any of the 72 holes included and re-arranging them into new, 18 hole courses. A further course customisation can be carried out by choosing the type of tree required.

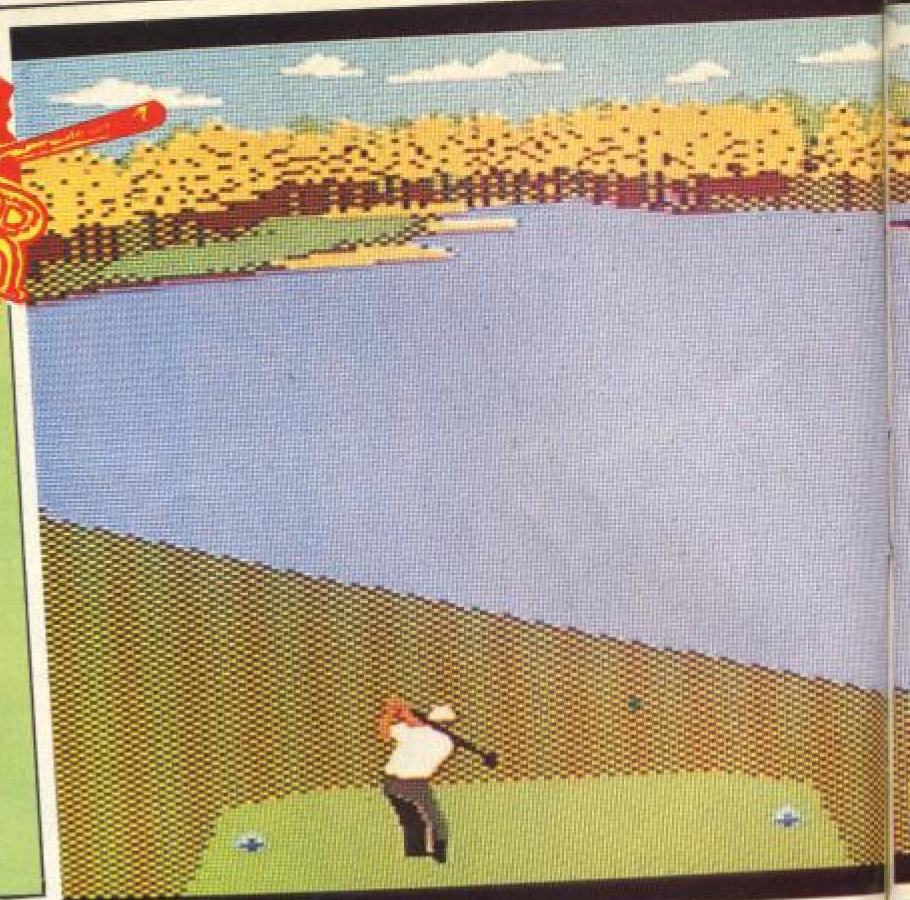
An option to practice driving and putting is included, and for the first time there's an overhead view of the course to help plan your shots.

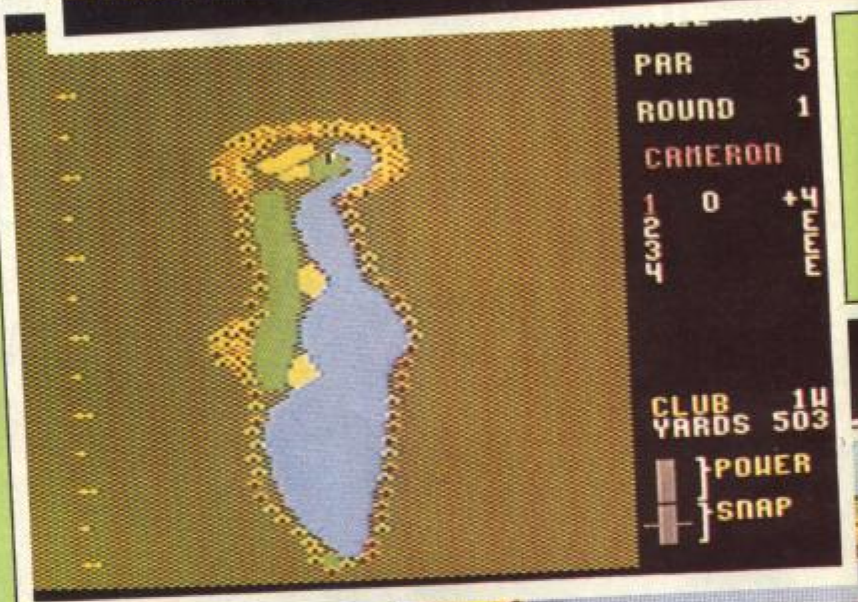
You may think that US Gold are flogging the Leaderboard **format to death, but this is the best of the series.** World Class Leaderboard **enhances the features of the earlier versions, and gives a golfing fan a chance to live out the fantasy of playing on three of the world's most famous courses, a fantasy which is made more authentic by the excellent implementation of the courses and superlative playability. The brilliantly designed fourth course is a real test of skill and should perplex even the most proficient of** Leaderboard **players. Although you may have reservations about buying a third golfing game, take a look – you may find yourself in for a pleasant surprise.**

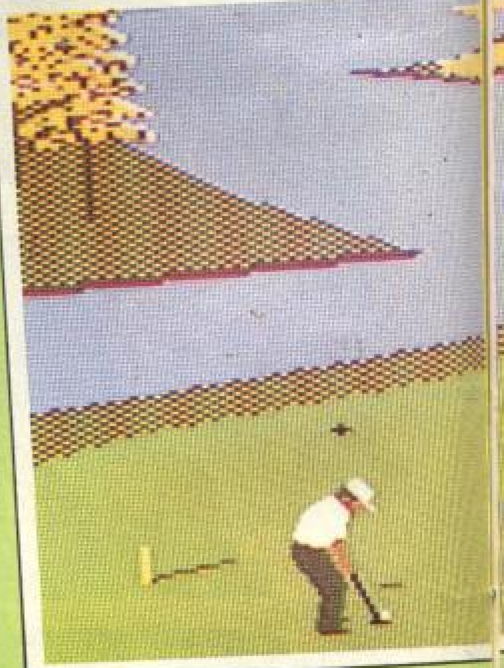




US Gold have arguably milked Leaderboard **dry, what with the** Tournament **courses and** Executive Leaderboard**. Unlike the latter however, the trees and bunkers in** World Class Leaderboard **haven't been thrown in for good measure – they are an integral part of each course, and far more strategy and thought is required. The four courses offer a significant challenge, and the package represents excellent value – even if you own any of the previous versions. I think Access would be pushing their luck if they released a follow-up to** World Class Leaderboard **– they can't possibly make any further improvements . . . or can they?**







▲ It's taken Cameron 12 shots to reach the green – and it's doubtful that he can sink the ball even at four feet!

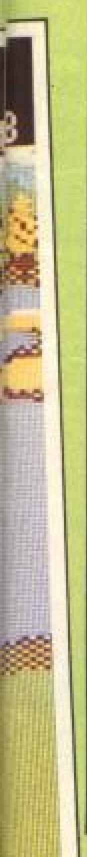


With World Class Leaderboard**, Access have finally achieved what may be considered to be *the* complete golfing simulation. It takes the best of** Leaderboard **and the** Executive Edition**, combines the two and then improves on them. The presentation and options are excellent, and the game is far more playable than any of the previous incarnations. It's a shame that this wasn't released instead of the** Executive Edition**, as the market place may not exactly meet this latest offering with open arms. Still,** WCL **will remain the standard by which all golfing games (if not sports simulations in general) are measured for a long time to come.**



▲ Teeing off across a large expanse of water

◀ An overhead view of hole three on the Gauntlet Country Club



As reviewed, the disk version loads the data for each hole separately. Thus, the cassette version will involve a multi-load system, although at present it isn't known whether this will prove seriously detrimental.

PRESENTATION 95%
Excellent documentation and a vast array of options, although the multi-load does slow the proceedings.

GRAPHICS 90%
The course views are quickly drawn and pleasing to the eye, and the animation is of the highest standard.

SOUND 78%
No music, but the superb spot effects more than make up for this omission.

HOOKABILITY 94%
Instantly playable and compelling.

LASTABILITY 89%
Three reasonably accurate representations of existing golf courses to keep ardent golfers busy for months, plus the highly challenging Gauntlet Country Club course for added lasting interest.

VALUE 92%
Worthwhile, as any similarities between this version and its predecessors are almost superficial.

OVERALL 94%
Quite simply the apex in golfing simulations. Tough, demanding, challenging and requiring far more skill and strategy than previous versions.

STRIKE

MAD, £2.99 cass, joystick or keys

ollowing in the path of Access' *Tenth Frame* and Advance's *Indoor Sports* package comes *Strike*, another binary bowling simulation. Either one or two players can participate, the computer taking the place of an absent second player.

The main screen gives an overhead view of the lane, with your bowler standing at the left, next to the ball-return. He is moved right or left to the required position on the lane – where pushing forward on the joystick causes him to begin his run-up. Pressing and holding down the fire button starts the bowlers' swing, and releasing the button also releases the ball, which then proceeds down the lane.

Wrongly timed shots result in the ball merely dropping to the floor (or the bowler's foot), and a foot-fault is called if the bowler's run-up encroaches onto the lane – in both cases a zero score is awarded.

Contact between the ball and the pins is shown in real time and the consequent pin-fall is displayed at the top left, to be reset by the machine seconds later. The corresponding score is noted on your score-sheet at the bottom of the screen, ready for your next bowl.



As far as I can make out, Strike **seems to be based on the game of ten-pin bowling. This is strange, as it bears little relation to the activity of the same name which I participate in every week. The action of bowler and ball is unrealistic and the pin-fall is a joke: hitting the head-pin either obtains a strike . . . or leaves three of the back pins standing! It's simplistic, boring and frustratingly limited. To be quite honest, any further criticism seems superfluous. Just pretend this game was never written and save yourself three quid – or go and play the real thing, it's a lot more fun.**



Why Mastertronic have released a product as sub-standard as this after Epyx's great Tenth Frame **is quite beyond me. A budget price should not be an excuse for a bad game. The single screen action destroys the atmosphere and suspense of where the ball may end up in its progression to the pins. The player has no control over the ball's curve and power, making** Strike! **very boring – and waiting for the computer in a one player game only prolongs the agony.** Strike! **contains no realism and not even a pinch of addictiveness, you'd do well to avoid it.**



This half-baked attempt at a bowling program is really annoying. Play is frustratingly slow, with the sprite plodding back and forth across the alley as if its knees were glued together. Releasing the ball is a very fiddly exercise, and I felt that I didn't really have control over the action – even when I scored several strikes. If you're hankering for a bowling simulation save up for Tenth Frame**, unlike** Strike **it's worth every penny.**

PRESENTATION 39%
Confusing, slow and inadequate.

GRAPHICS 29%
A bland colour scheme complements the poorly animated character and pins.

SOUND 38%
Uninspired music and weak spot effects.

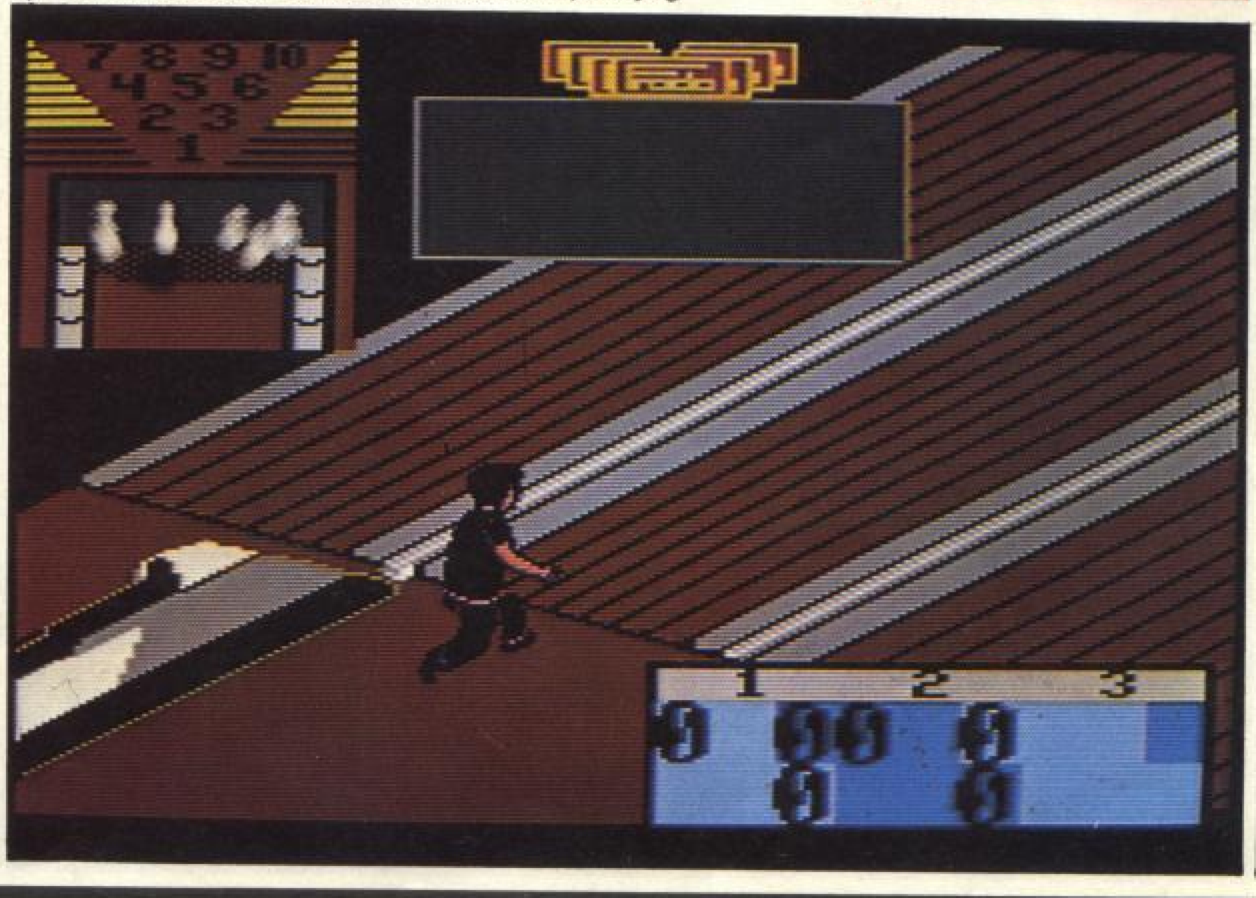
HOOKABILITY 20%
The fiddly control method and simplified gameplay do little to stir the imagination.

LASTABILITY 5%
The already limited appeal is completely lost when *one* ball has finally been successfully launched.

VALUE 13%
A complete waste of money.

OVERALL 8%
A pitiful bowling simulation, offering virtually no entertainment whatsoever.

▼ **Strike! photographer Cameron Pound sends the pins flying**





ZZAP! TEST

THE DETECTIVE

Argus Press Software, £8.95 cass, joystick only

Deep in the English countryside lies MacFungus Mansion, an old stately home owned by the old and stately Angus MacFungus – at least it used to be . . .

Finding an anonymous call on his answerphone saying 'MacFungus has kicked it . . . ', Inspector Snide of the Yard suddenly finds himself with a murder case on his hands and sets off to MacFungus Mansion to begin the task of discovering whodunnit.

Taking the role of Inspector Snide, your aim is to gather information and clues from around the house, solve the case and implicate the murderer.

Snide moves around the Mansion, which is displayed using 3D, Ultimate-style graphics, and is full of all the usual rooms, corridors and secret passages.

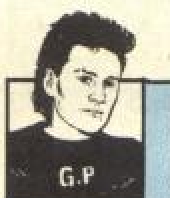
The house also boasts a strange collection of inhabitants, including the incoherently babbling Major, an absent-minded professor, a collection of servants and even a smattering of the clergy.

Whenever Snide is in the vicinity of an item of interest, the border flashes and on clicking the fire button, a menu sheet appears, containing all the relevant options.

A large series of commands is available, including the ability to examine, manipulate and utilise objects. Any useful items discovered may be carried, but you are limited to six at a time – unless you can find something to carry them in.

You also have the option to interrogate the house members, questioning them about MacFungus, objects or other characters. This isn't a guarantee of a useful answer, however.

As the game progresses, you find more and more deaths occurring, carried out in a number of strange and macabre ways: strangulation, knifing and even squashing under a fallen piano. You have to collect the necessary evidence and accuse the murderer before you run out of time (and suspects!) – fortunately, the game has a pause mode allowing you time ponder your next move . . .



Now this is an entirely different approach to a whodunnit, combining elements of an Ultimate arcade adventure with those of a murder mystery, and resulting in an atmospheric and rewarding experience. It takes a little while to get used to the awkward inertial cursor used to select icons, and it takes even longer to get to grips with what's going on and to find some useful clues – the instructions could have been better. I was a little frustrated by this to start with, but the joy of finding a secret passage soon alleviated my depression. A fair bit of leisurely plodding around the mansion is required, so the pace is more often than not slow, and some of the responses and situations become predictable after a short while, but on the whole The Detective **should provide more than adequate entertainment for the price.**



At last! Argus Press Software have released something praiseworthy.

The Detective **is a smart little game, with some neat animation and plenty of humour. The action tends to be a bit on the slow side, but should keep most would-be detectives frowning for a couple of weeks – as long as they stick at it. The instructions are rather sparse and some difficulty was encountered at first, the menu system being a little unwieldy to the uninitiated. Not the best detection game ever, but certainly not the worst, and by far the best release from Argus Press in a long time.**

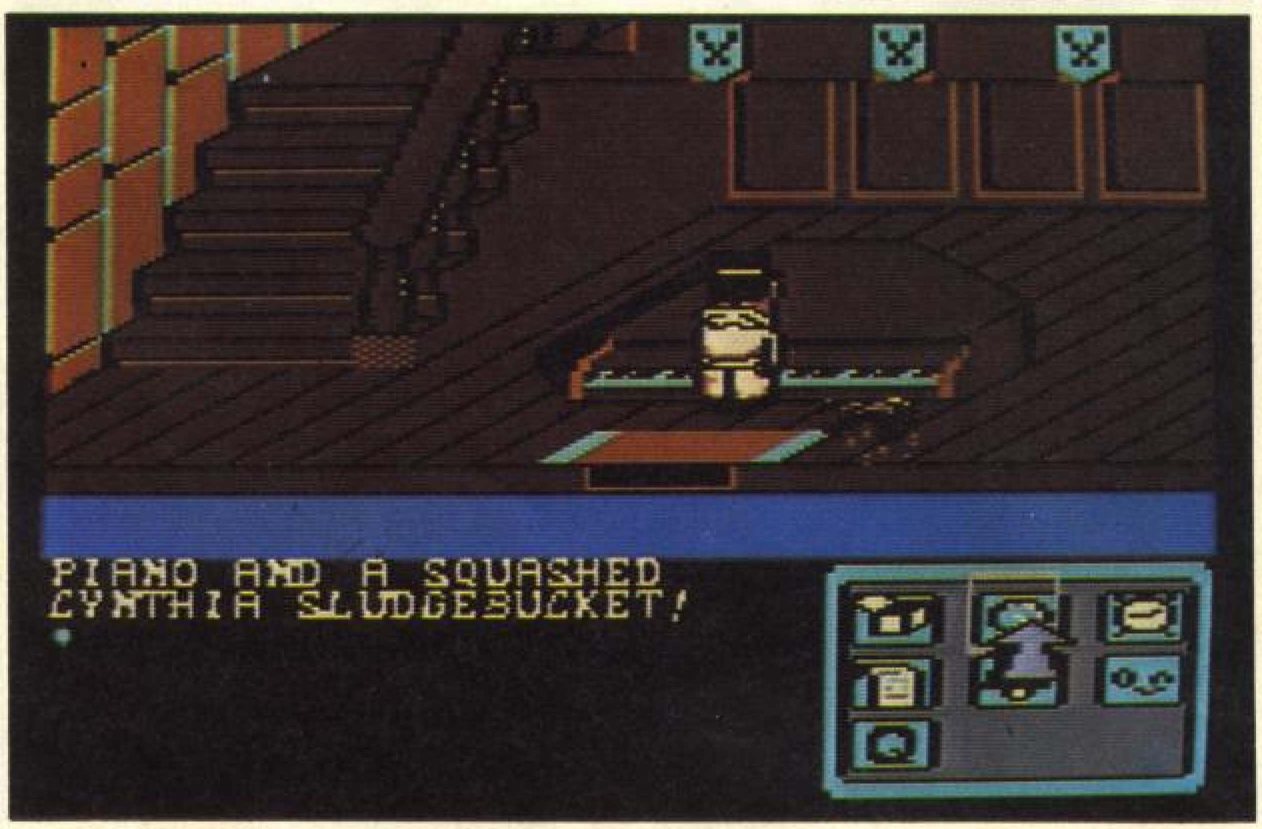


Superb presentation is usually a very poor reason to buy a game, however this may be one exception to that rule – I have rarely seen an arcade adventure which looks and feels as good as this one. The characters develop distinct personalities, and the backgrounds and movement give a feeling of thrilling reality. There are a few slight problems, the depth is questionable, and the pace is occasionally a little sluggish – but the humour and mystery involved serve to compensate a great deal for these minor faults. I recommend this as a highly entertaining and beautifully polished piece of software – however, if it's an absorbing and long-lasting mystery you're after . . .



▲ **Inspector Snide confronts the mad Professor Bull in the scullery**

▼ **Egads! Cynthia didn't last long . . . and what away to go!**



PRESENTATION 80%
Very good, although the instructions and icon system could have been better.

GRAPHICS 81%
Well drawn and animated characters compensate for the fairly bland backdrops.

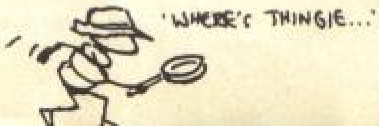
SOUND 69%
Awful title tune, but good spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 63%
Exploring the mansion is easy enough, but it takes time to get to grips with the icons and general game structure.

LASTABILITY 74%
A tough case to crack, providing many hours of absorbing (although occasionally tedious) sleuth-work.

VALUE 76%
A good game at a fair price.

OVERALL 78%
A novel approach to the whodunnit theme which remains entertaining even though more leg-work is required than brain-work.



AD
NER*

THE ARCADE SMASH HIT THAT RECREATES THE SPEED AND EXCITEMENT OF THESE CLASSIC ENCOUNTERS





Young or old, whatever your age everyone enjoys the antics of the cunning Road Runner as he baffles and bemuses poor Wile E Coyote. Or does he?...

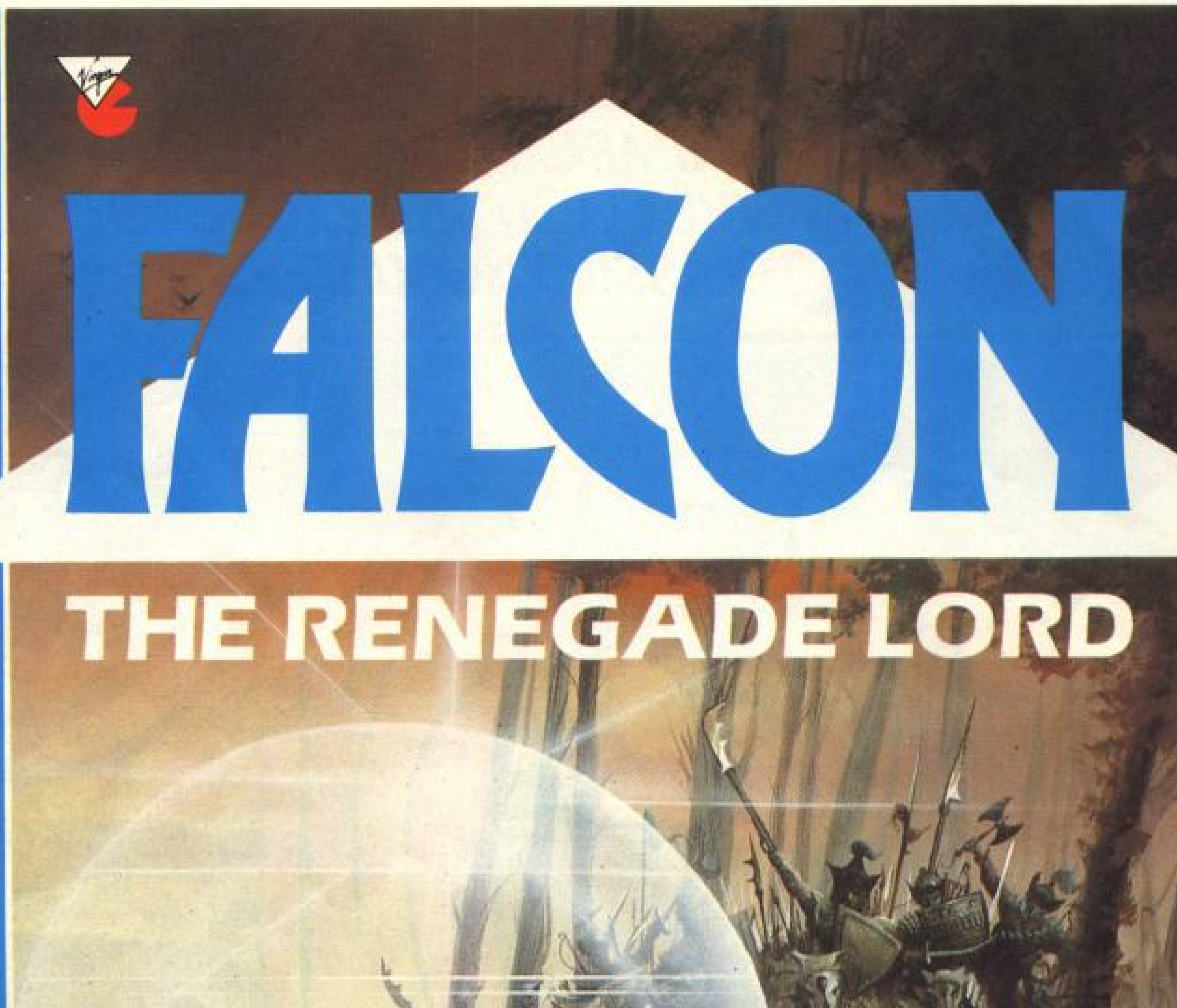
This is your chance to really find out as you take on the role of Road Runner in this comic, all action extravaganza that recreates these nail biting chases and the fast moving excitement to perfection. Speed through canyons and along the highways following the trail of birdseed left for you to feed on (is this the first trick???) Dodge your way round the onrushing trucks keeping an eye out for the perilous mines and feather ruffling, leg busting oil slicks. What dastardly plans has the sleazy Wile E Coyote got in store for you as he lurks in hiding, cowardly awaiting his moment to enjoy a succulent roast of "Road Runner and French Fries".

We're sure you'll overcome all the dirty tricks he can throw at you with ease, agility and grace and a haughty "Beep Beep". Overcome them that is if you've got nerves of steel, the reflexes of a wildcat and the speed of the fastest bird on two legs, otherwise its sorry, goodnight and "Burp Burp"!!!

CBM64/128	**£9.99** Tape
	£14.99 Disk
Spectrum 48K	**£8.99** Tape
Amstrad	**£9.99** Tape
	£14.99 Disk
Atari ST	**£24.99** Disk

U.S. Gold Ltd., Units 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX. Tel: 021 356 3388.

U.S. GOLD All American Software ®



This superb arcade game is based on the popular multiple-choice adventure series by Mark Smith and Jamie Thomson, published by Sphere Books. Set in 3033 AD you are a special agent, codename **FALCON,** and your mission is to halt the tracks of a renegade Time Lord who is threatening to disrupt future history by his ruthless meddling in the past. Your time machine "**Falcon's Wing**" takes you in your quest to ensure the timelines of the future remain uncorrupted!

Please send me **FALCON:** The Renegade Lord

Commodore **64/128** ☐ Spectrum **48/128** ☐

I enclose a cheque/postal order made payable to **Virgin Games** and crossed

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MARIO BROS

Ocean, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only

Meet Mario and Luigi – the Mario Brothers – two whacky workmen dedicated to maintaining the cleanliness of a pipe network. A conversion of the ageing Nintendo arcade game, this Ocean release allows one or two-players to undertake the brother's gruelling task.

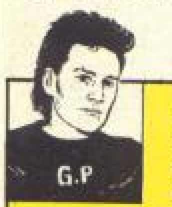
The action takes place on a single platform-filled screen. Creatures appear from the two pipes at the top of the screen and proceed to make their way down to the bottom. It's up to Mario and Luigi to dispose of them.

Pressing the fire button makes the brother jump – and more importantly, punch. Hitting a creature from below as it trundles across a platform flips it onto its back, allowing it to be kicked off. Turtles and Flies need only be hit once, whereas crabs require two hits to flip them onto their backs. Flies are more awkward to flip though, as they jump rather than scamper across the screen. If a creature is not kicked off after being flipped, it slowly rights itself and continues its journey, faster and more aggressive than before.

Fireballs roar across the screen at regular intervals, roasting any brother in their path and disappearing off the other side. Coins also drop from the pipes, earning 800 points when collected or punched.

The 'POW' marker at the bottom of the screen makes life a little easier for the chummy brothers. Hitting the monogrammed box jolts the whole screen and causes its entire menagerie to flip over, however this is only good for three hits.

The third level is a bonus screen where the POW marker is refreshed and coins are collected to earn extra points. There are no creatures to dispose of, but a 20 second time limit is imposed – so speed is of the essence. Similar Bonus screens appear at regular intervals.



I was initially extremely annoyed that this conversion doesn't look as good or play as well as the original – and as far as I can see it should have done. However, perseverence paid off, and despite suffering at the hands of a few unnecessary frustrating elements such as the control mode (I'm sure Mario didn't keep running in the original), I eventually found myself enjoying the proceedings. The two-player game isn't as much fun though, which is sad, as playing with and/or against a second player was what made the original so good. Disappointing, but enjoyable enough if you give it a chance.



I was expecting this to be something really special, but when I played it I came away disappointed. The fundamental elements of the original are still there, but the conversion just doesn't play right. I don't like the way that the sprite keeps running when you let go of the joystick, and I'm sure that the character's skid is a little excessive. The graphics are also disappointing – the original Mario, Luigi and monsters had plenty of character, but this has been sadly lost in the conversion. Mario Bros **is fun as a two-player game, but I don't think there's enough in it to keep a single player engrossed for longer than a few hours.**



▲ **Ten coins for Mario to collect on the first bonus screen . . .**



Ignore the awful loading screen – the graphics do get better. However, control of the brothers is very fiddly as they keep moving even when the joystick is central, and it's quite tricky to get them dead still. The fact that you can also jump through the ends of the platforms is a pain, especially when you intended bumping a turtle, and he gets you instead. Fans of the arcade version may be a little disappointed, but otherwise this will suffice until you can afford a second-hand arcade machine or a Nintendo.

▼ **Having been flipped onto their backs, the turtles manage to right themselves – contrary to natural laws**



PRESENTATION 62%
Generally shoddy, with poor loading and title screens, and no restart or pause – however, there is a two-player option.

GRAPHICS 53%
Simple backdrops and characterless sprites.

SOUND 70%
Jolly jingles and spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 65%
Addictive, if a little frustrating due to the control method.

LASTABILITY 51%
Quite tedious – only the two-player option provides any lasting interest.

VALUE 52%
Fair, although playing the arcade version 40 times would be just as rewarding.

OVERALL 55%
Fun, but sadly not as playable as the original.

ZZAP! TEST

SPORT OF KINGS

MAD, £2.99 cass, joystick or keys

The latest release from MAD allows up to five players to partake in a simulated day at the races. First of all the players decide whether the state of the course, weights of jockeys and distances of the courses are to affect the outcome of each race.



As a single player game this doesn't work too well, but if two or more are playing it really comes into its own. Winning and losing money creates a great atmosphere, and the nail-biting racing scenes provide plenty of excuse for screaming and shouting as the horses gallop up the course. The comprehensive icon system is very easy to use, and the proceedings run smoothly without unnecessary and frustrating delays. I enjoyed playing this, and for three quid it provides an entertaining and enjoyable diversion from the usual shooting or adventuring action.



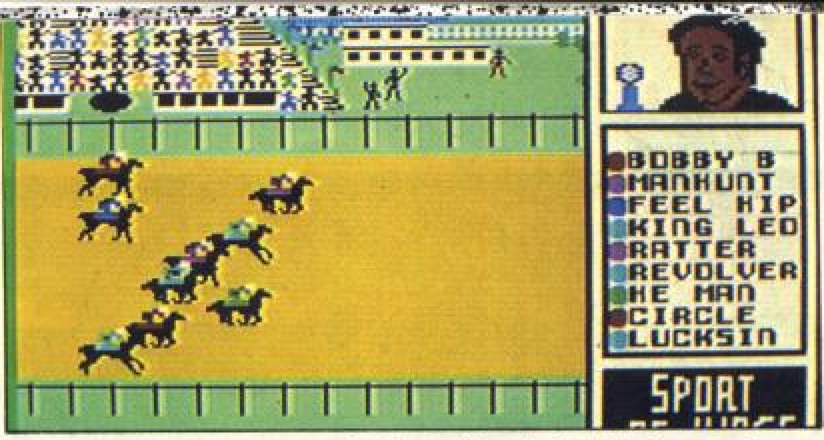
Gamblers Anonymous will be having extra members if this is anything to go by. I lost about a million pounds in a couple of minutes – and didn't even care! Sport Of Kings **doesn't exactly look regal, but although the graphics are poor, they don't detract from the playability. The adrenalin still flows when your horse is a neck in front with half a furlong to go, whether it looks deformed or not. Any game of this fashion is always best when played in a group, and I would even go as far as to say that it is completely useless as a single player game. If you do have gambling friends, get them round for a harmless evening's entertainment at the races.**

Also, the number of horses running in the season is set at either 25, 52 or 72.

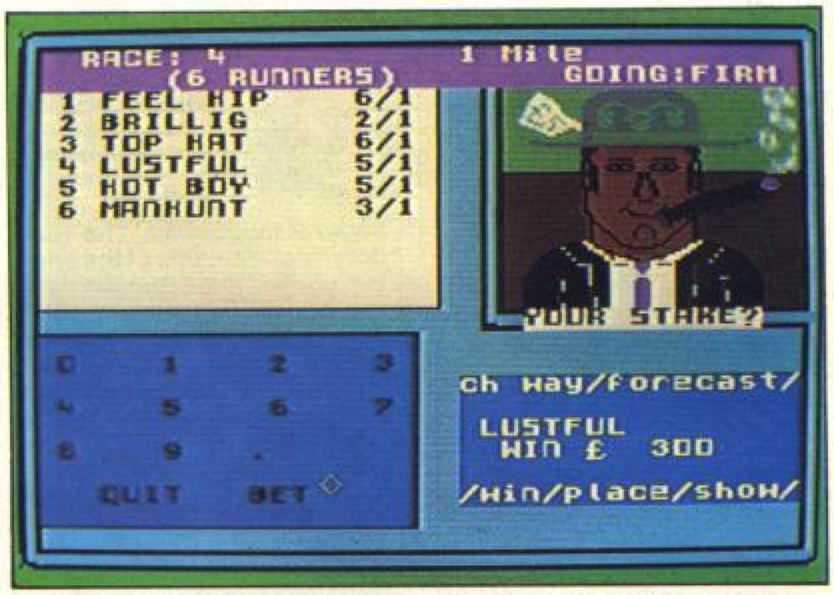
The main screen features eight icons which allow the player to display details about the next race, study each player's current financial situation, read the form book, bet and start the race. The other three icons allow players to join or leave a current game, load or save the form books and accounts and print out a form or racing information.

Race information gives a list of runners and their odds and form cards give a list of the performances of each horse. At the start there are no form cards, so it's useful to run a few races and build up a record. Bets are placed either each way, straight forecast or a reserved forecast. When the players are happy with their choices the race begins.

The screen displays a



▲ **Manhunt takes a comfortable first, with a photo-finish for second place**



▲ **That's your friendly neighbourhood bookie, who's looking happy because he's just taken £300 for a 5-1 bet on Lustful**

TAG-TEAM WRESTLING

US Gold, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick or keys

Scantily clad young men in their underwear? Calm down girlies – it's just *Tag-team Wrestling*; latter-day gladiators of the roped arena.

Before beginning a bout, you choose between the single player option or the two-player mode. In the latter case there are two teams available: 'Ricky's Fighters' (the good guys), and 'Strong and Bad' (the bad guys).

On selecting your team, the match begins and each combatant is directed around the ring. There are seven moves available, from a body slam to a drop kick, each corresponding to one of the eight joystick positions (up and down relating to the same move). Pressing the fire button and selecting a position initiates the move, and a correctly executed manoeuvre results in a fall, where your opponent is thrown to the mat and pinned down. If he fails to free himself by a count of three, you win the bout.

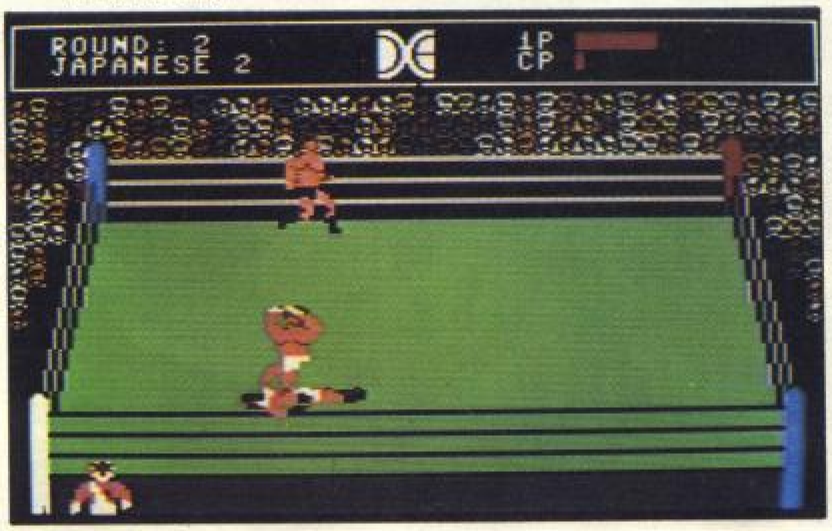
As in real tag-team wrestling you 'tag' your partner to take your place in the ring.

The viewpoint changes to that of the floor and the ring's side when a wrestler is thrown from the ring. There are weapons to be found lying around which can be picked up and used to batter your opponent (no Johnny Cougar honour in this ring!). Being counted out of the ring for more than 20 seconds results in disqualification and



Why are US Gold bothering to release this when they've already cornered the wrestling market with their excellent Championship Wrestling**? This is laughably inferior to Epyx's classic, sporting such features as dire graphics, highly annoying sound and clumsy gameplay. Opposing wrestlers are beaten time and time again using the same move, and consequently the action becomes incredibly repetitive and boring. The** Karate Champ **freebie on the other side is a consolation, but I'd avoid the package entirely.**

▼ **Not so gripping grappling . . . a sample of the action found in** Tag Team Wrestling





This is one of the worst combat games around. The wrestlers are badly drawn, and look awful as they stutter around the ring. In one player mode it seems very difficult to obtain a clean move, and the whole thing soon becomes extremely wearisome as your wrestler gets thrown to the deck time after time. The two-player option offers no real improvement, and the game is generally very poor. Tag-Team Wrestling **comes together with** Karate Champ **but this proves a rather pointless exercise, as** Karate Champ **is better, and available on the Americana label for three quid! I know which one I'd buy . . .**

panoramic view of the scrolling course with a commentator positioned in a box at the top right of the screen. The race starts and the horses gallop off down the course until all have passed the finishing post, whereupon the winners are displayed and any players who have successfully forecast the result are paid.

PRESENTATION 91%
Totally user-friendly, with an easy-to-use icon system and plenty of options.

GRAPHICS 43%
Rather poor on the whole, but they still manage to generate a decent atmosphere.

SOUND 4%
Little in the way of functional spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 73%
Incredibly easy to get into, and enjoyable from the off.

LASTABILITY 51%
Plenty of group fun to be had, but not much lasting entertainment on offer for a single player.

VALUE 72%
A complete day out at the races – and you won't lose an arm and a leg.

OVERALL 61%
A successful multi-player gambling game.

the beginning of the next bout.

Titles are awarded according to the number of matches won, from American Champion for three matches, up to Super Champion on gaining 25 consecutive victories.

PRESENTATION 48%
A few options, but otherwise below average.

GRAPHICS 27%
Poorly defined characters and appalling animation.

SOUND 31%
Pitiful music and very basic spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 35%
The fiddly joystick control and slow, unrewarding gameplay is instantly off-putting.

LASTABILITY 20%
Lacks two essential ingredients: variety and playability.

VALUE 21%
The addition of the marginally superior Karate Champ **doesn't make** Tag Team Wrestling **any more worthwhile.**

OVERALL 25%
A fine example of the beat 'em up genre at its very worst.

KARATE CHAMP

Americana, £2.99 cass, joystick only

Listen up all you karate fans! If you want to become a true *Karate Champ* all you have to do is travel to nine locations around the world and challenge the karate master who lives at each. Battles are fought over three bouts, with the winner being the first to score two points.

There are 16 available moves, accessed by use of the joystick and fire button. A successful hit or punch scores either a half or a full point, depending on the effectiveness of its execution. Points are automatically added to the relevant player's total.

A 30 second timer ticks down throughout, and when one of the battling pair finally scores two points the time remaining is converted to points. If the timer reaches zero before either player scores two points, the one with the highest score wins. In the case of a draw the judge gives his verdict. Having won a bout, the player progresses to the next level, however the game ends if the computer wins two bouts.

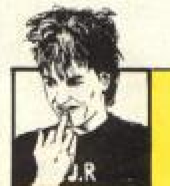
Every third screen contains a bonus game where bonus points can be earned. The first requires the player to dodge or break tiles which are thrown towards him, the second is a brick smashing contest and the third involves punching a charging bull.



Karate Champ **is yet another mediocre addition to the beat 'em up scene. The graphics are small and ineffective, and though the music is similar to that in the arcade version, it's still not up to much. If you want a straightforward oriental beat 'em up, try** International Karate **– it's superior to this tepid conversion in all aspects . . . especially playability.**



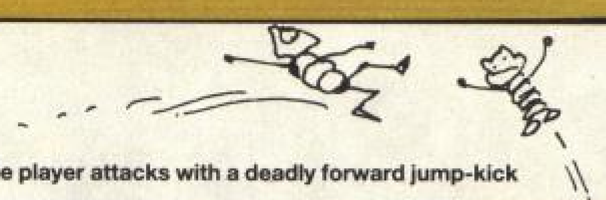
I thought we'd seen the last of the beat 'em ups months ago – but obviously not! Previously released in America, Karate Champ **is two years old now, and looks every day of it. It's still moderately entertaining – for a while at least, but with so many similar games on the market, this seems to be a bit on the late side. Comparisons to** International Karate **are inevitable, and in this case,** Karate Champ **ain't so hot. If you do insist on buying this, don't bother with the two-game pack with** Tag-Team Wrestling, **as this is the better purchase by far, and it's only three quid.**



This 'official' conversion of an arcade game inspired a complete new genre of computer software – however, it looks a bit dated these days. The simplistic graphics and sound aren't anything to write home about, and the gameplay has been seen many times before. The multi-load is a bit of a detraction, but if you're prepared to bear with it, and still enjoy this type of computer game there's plenty of cheap action to be had. If not, forget it.

The battling duo eye each other up, oblivious to the attractive little number between them





The white player attacks with a deadly forward jump-kick



PRESENTATION 64%
Good on the whole, but the multi-load is a chore.

GRAPHICS 46%
Unremarkable sprites fight over simplistic but colourful backdrops.

SOUND 43%
Weak tunes and reasonable spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 60%
Easy enough to pick up and play, and fairly addictive with it.

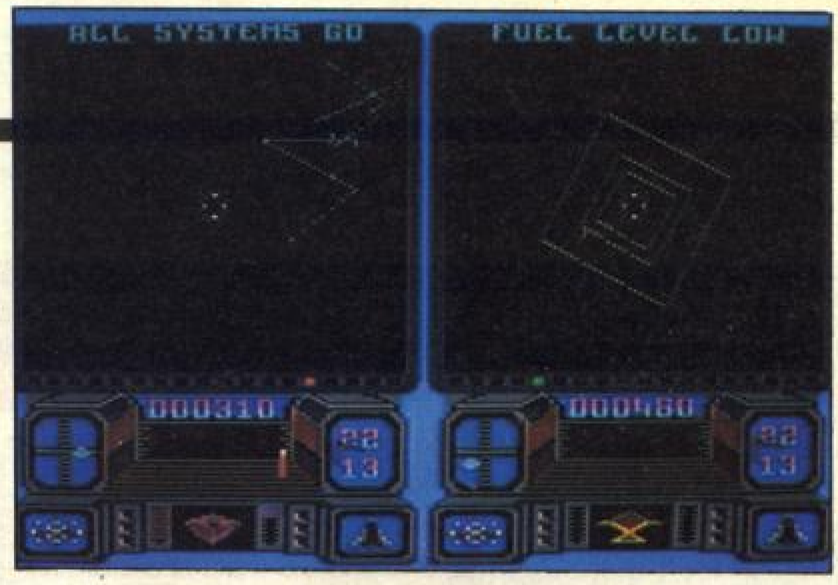
LASTABILITY 48%
Lacks variety and lasting appeal.

VALUE 63%
One of the cheapest fighting games around, but far from the best.

OVERALL 52%
A mediocre conversion of a dated and uninspiring arcade game.

DOGFIGHT 2187

Starlight, £9.99 cass, £12.99 disk, joystick only



▲ **As Player Two warps to a new part of the galaxy, Player One continues to battle the alien forces**

Deep in the Alpha Centauri sector, a rift has appeared in the space-time continuum and formed a gateway to another dimension. Alien lifeforms are now spilling into our Universe, piloting sophisticated starships and wreaking havoc amongst the colonised planets.

Remembering the legends of the 'old ones', Rhett Dexter recalls tales of a 'Warp Field Generator', a machine powerful enough to close such a rift, dismantled and dispersed throughout the universe. Taking the bit between his teeth, Rhett steals the World Corporation's new interstellar fighter and sets off in search of the long-abandoned generator.

Assuming the role of Rhett Dexter, you take control of the fighter. Your mission is to battle through the Galaxy, destroying alien craft and collecting generator sections. There are a hundred such sections in the Galaxy, but only nine are needed to close the hole. Only two may be carried at any one time however, so several trips are necessary to save the universe.

Either one or two players can take on the computer, or alternatively, two players can compete in a head-to-head contest.

A vertically divided display shows both ships' control panels, with the starfield, planets and alien attack craft displayed in forced perspective vector graphics. A series of instruments beneath each screen indicates the ship's vital signs, including a proximity radar (showing enemy ships within radar range), and a Galactic radar which gives your ship's position in relation to the hole in space.

The enemy attack in waves of up to four ships, one of which may be carrying a piece of generator – however this doesn't appear on your radar until all attack waves have been destroyed. At this stage you can fly into the piece and pick it up.

When your shields and fuel levels are falling low, flying to one of the available planets causes a series of concentric vector squares to appear. Guiding your ship through the centre of the squares replenishes shields and fuel. Again, the planet only becomes visible on radar after all the enemy ships have been destroyed.



There seems to be very little to this game – other than the jerky vector graphics routine, which you occasionally meet on your pointless trek around a seemingly lifeless universe. Though detailed, the ships are poorly animated and move slowly. Presentation is also disappointing, with no control options and no title screen or music. The tune that plays during the game creates no atmosphere and is very annoying, and the spot effects aren't much better. Definitely *not* **worth the asking price, unless you want to pay to be bored.**



In space no-one can hear you scream . . . which is exactly what I was doing when I played Dogfight 2187 **for the first time. Its aims are commendable, but the final result hardly seems worth the effort. The vector graphics move very quickly, especially when considering that the computer has two screens to handle at once, but this does little to offset the tedious gameplay and lack of lasting appeal. At times, I found myself whizzing through space with nothing to attack, and no idea where I was heading. The radar certainly doesn't help and the instructions do nothing to alleviate the problem. Ultimately, this is a rapid but confused shoot 'em up, which should have been something special, but unfortunately fails on one major point: playability.**



The control panel is this game's greatest letdown – it doesn't seem to relate to what's going on. The Elite**-type scanner works reasonably well, but the rest of the console is cluttered and unclear. Another annoying point is the awful control method – why didn't the author use sensible pilot controls? The 'Up to climb, Down to dive' system is totally unsuited to this type of game and completely detracts from the sense of realism. There's no variety in the action and the proceedings' unclear nature leads to frustration. The vector graphics are nice and fast – but unfortunately the gameplay comes a very poor second.**

▼ **Both players are having a hard time dealing with the invaders from another universe**



PRESENTATION 50%
The two-player option doesn't compensate for the weak instructions, inadequate in-game presentation and lack of title screen.

GRAPHICS 61%
Reasonably effective split screen vector graphics, although some shapes lose their clarity due to the choice of colour.

SOUND 44%
Irritating tune which is soon toggled for the marginally superior spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 42%
Initially confusing, and the unsuitable control rubs salt into the wound.

LASTABILITY 39%
Minimal – hardly any lure to return to the below average blasting action, even in the two-player mode.

VALUE 31%
Not enough addictive gameplay to merit the high price tag.

OVERALL 41%
Technically polished, but sadly lacking any absorbing action.

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I, BALL

Firebird, £1.99 cass, joystick or keys

Trouble has reared its ugly head in the world of the Balls – trouble in the form of the cruel and evil **Terry Ball**. This spherical renegade has captured the happy family of **Lover Ball**, **Eddy Ball**, **Glow Ball**, and **No Ball**, and is threatening to deflate them. Their only hope lies with **I Ball**, a rotund and courageous fellow who managed to escape the clutches of the evil one. He alone has the ability, bank balance and good looks to rescue the stricken group. He alone can save his chums from puncture – you alone control his actions . . .

This mission of mercy involves negotiating 16 vertically scrolling obstacle courses within an allotted time. Each course is made up of densely packed metallic obstructions, the majority of which are harmless. However, an occasional fatal flasher is encountered *en route*, with contact resulting in a loss of one of I Ball's five lives.

As the rounded adventurer picks his way through the lunatic scrap-metal courses he is attacked and bombarded by lethal devices. Microwave ovens, crabs, roulette wheels and Polo mints appear, flash for a couple of seconds, turn grey and pursue the hapless hero. During the flashing stage an item is harmless and can be touched, however a grey sprite is always deadly.

For defence there's a bubble-gun which sprays the hostiles with lethal fluid. The disadvantage of this weapon is that bubbles are only blown vertically, making our hero vulnerable to attack from the sides. Over-use results in the gun overheating, and it must then be allowed to cool down before re-use.

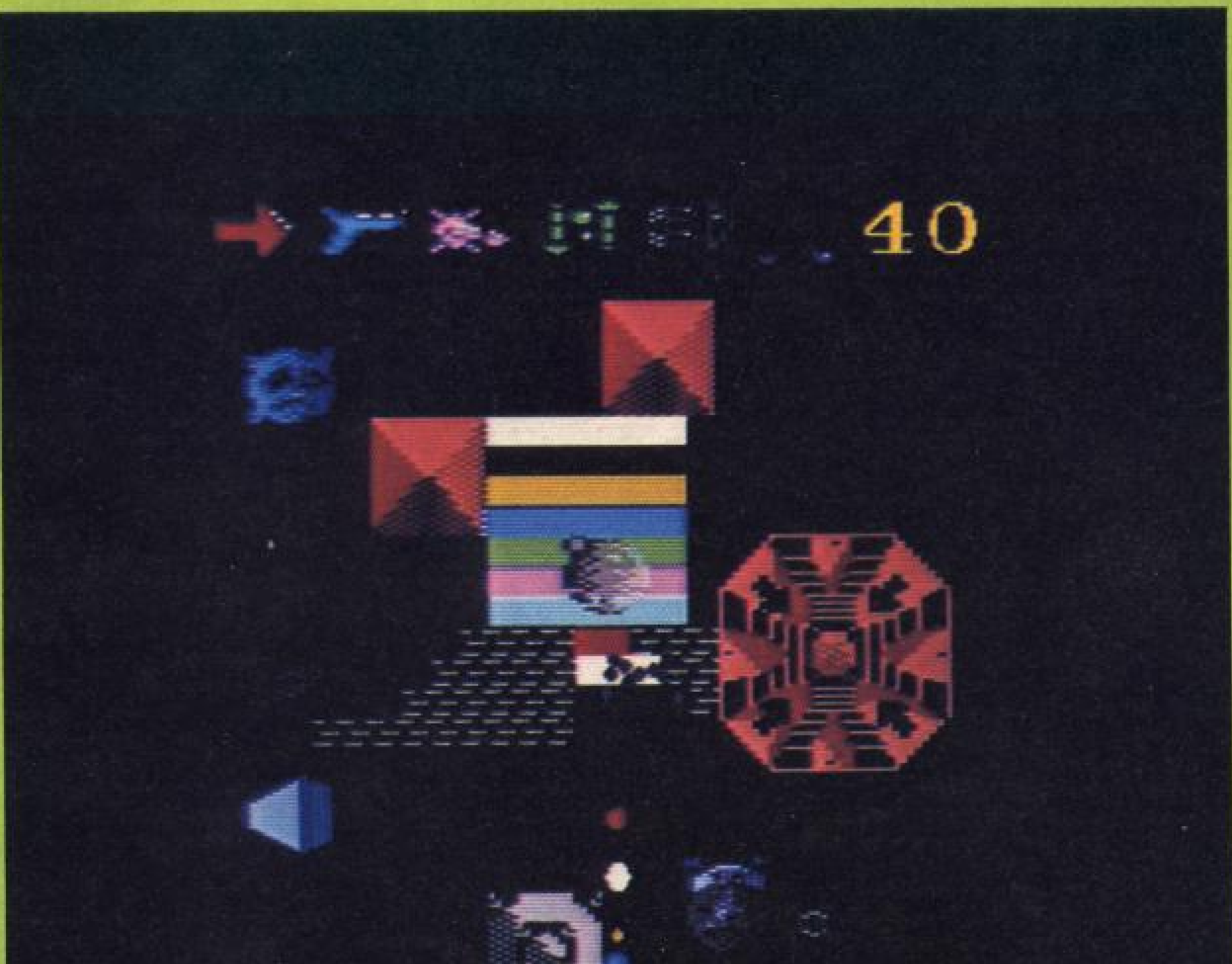
Occasionally a power disc inscribed with an X appears – touching this gains our hero an extra feature. Turbo speed is the first advantage gained, followed by single and twin lasers which shoot from the sides. Extra scores and extended time are also added, along with fuel injection, hyper braking, electro shields, hyper-space, molecule bombs and smart bombs. Status panels at the top and bottom of the screen show which weapons are currently held. Power discs are destroyed by the bubble-gun, thus losing the weapon or feature it offers, and some discs are faulty, resulting in the loss of the last gathered weapon if touched.

I Ball's friends are imprisoned at regular intervals along the 16 screen journey, and are released on completion of every fourth screen. If the radial one fails to complete a course before the numerical timer reaches zero, a life is lost and the course is started all over again. This is one adventure I Ball is never going to forget!



Okay, so the speech is incredible and the music's superb, but it would be nice if the game was of a similarly high standard. It's not awful, just a bit on the dull side – being a rather simple idea made a little more special by the unusual presentation. Standing alone it seems to lack that certain addictive quality (as do so many games these days) and can be a little *too* difficult – especially on the later levels. Still, at two quid you could do a lot worse . . . and the speech and music *are* very good.

Packing a full complement of death-dealing weaponry – I-I-I-I-I Ball!





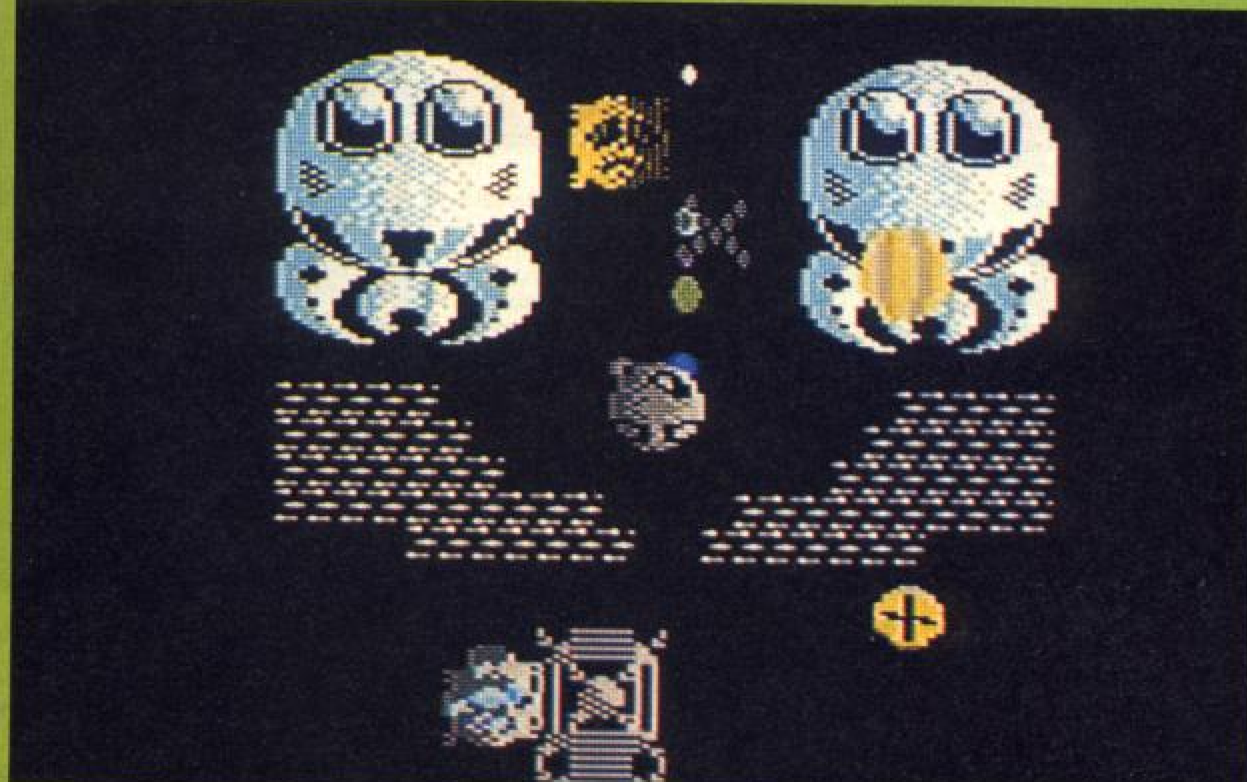
Leaving a trail of colourful spray in his wake, I Ball makes commendable progress



Yet another budget winner appears, this time in the form of a noisy vertically scrolling race game cum shoot 'em up. Apart from being incredibly playable and addictive, I, Ball **has some incredibly clear sampled speech.** 'I-I-I-I Ball' **shouts the program to announce that it has loaded.** 'Oh No' **it screams, to show how disappointed it is that you've just lost a life and then lets the world know of a player's failure by yelling** 'Game Over'. **These utterings are complemented by a brilliant Rob Hubbard tune which thumps away throughout, making proceedings even more frantic. Purchasing** I, Ball **is a wise investment of two quid.**

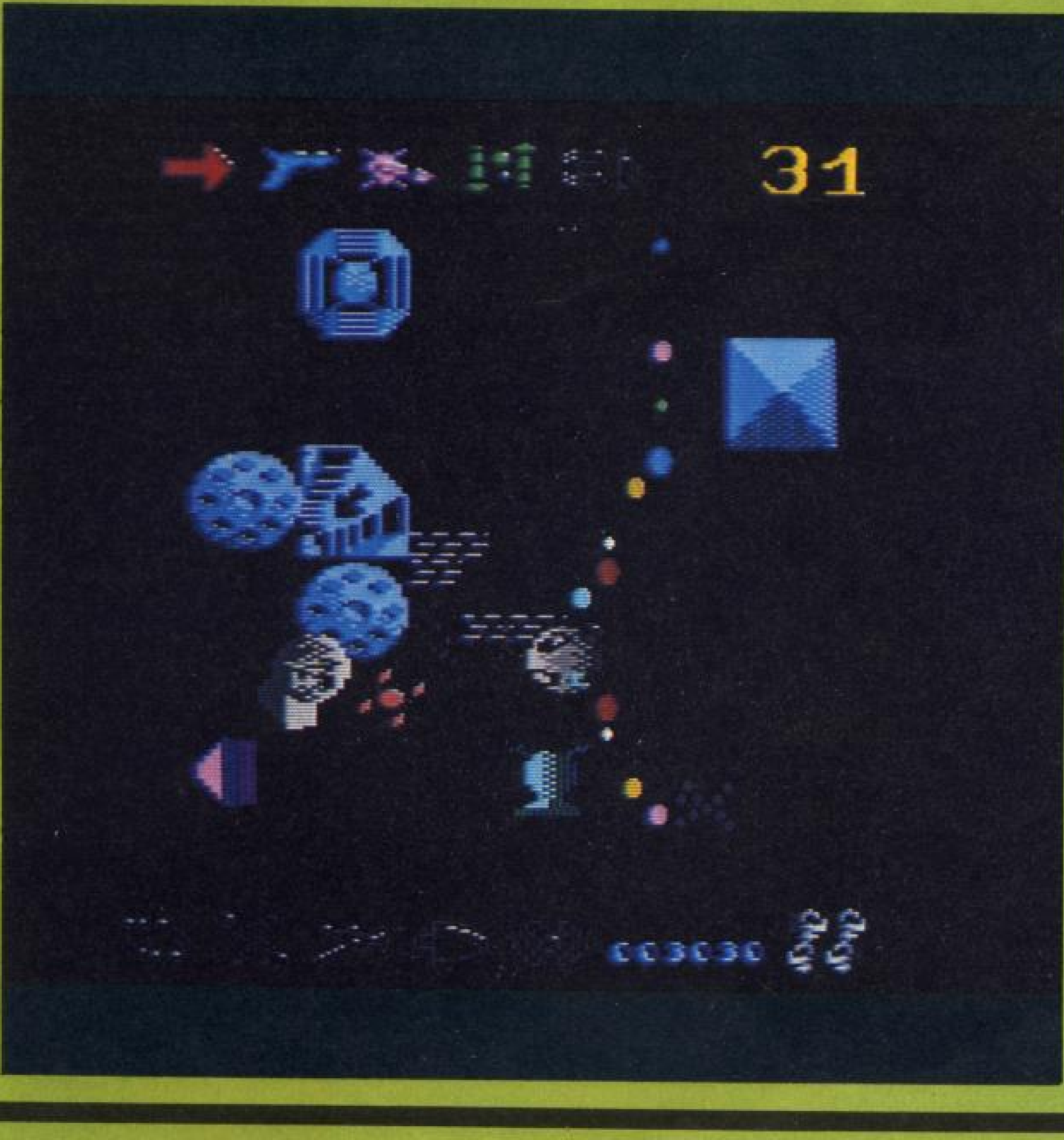






I Ball speeds ahead, leaving a useful power disc behind ▲

▼ A race to remember . . . I Ball gets heavy with the marauding aliens





I was pleasantly surprised by my first encounter with I, Ball – it may take a while to get into, but it's deviously addictive. The screen is beautifully adorned with a multitude of colours, yet it still manages to be easy on the eye. I love the different types of firepower, and having to work to capture equipment is very engrossing. I, Ball is 199 pence worth of sheer fun.

PRESENTATION 73%
Simple title screen with the facility to play the speech with the music, but no high score table or restart feature.

GRAPHICS 78%
Strange sprites and colours schemes are mixed together to provide an individual, yet effective look.

SOUND 95%
Fabulous speech, a brilliant tune and neat spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 81%
Tough, but instantly addictive and appealing.

LASTABILITY 77%
Sixteen increasingly demanding levels to complete, and the action is fast, furious and compelling.

VALUE 92%
Another budget bargain.

OVERALL 80%
An unusual and competent blend of shoot 'em up and racing action.

ARMY MOVES

Imagine, £8.95 cass, joystick only

What better way to celebrate becoming Captain of the Secret Operations Corps than by undertaking a do-or-die mission to retrieve stolen plans? These documents, vital to the allied army, are located in a bunker deep behind enemy lines – your task is to go in alone and recover them. The action takes place over seven levels of horizontally scrolling landscapes, with the latter three loaded independently after completion of the first four.

The first level is tackled in a missile-equipped jeep. The objective is to travel a predetermined distance along the road, jumping chasms and destroying heavily armed enemy jeeps and helicopters. When the objective, a hut, is reached, the player progresses to the next level – the helicopter journey.

This dangerous flight into the unknown is set over the next three levels, where the enemy do their best to blast the player from the sky. Squadrons of jet fighters fly in from either side, firing missiles as they approach – ground emplacements also add to the confusion, spewing forth deadly homing missiles. However, the chopper isn't defenceless, and answers with its array of air-to-ground and air-to-air missiles. The jets continue their attack over the next two levels while the enemy defences change from rocket launching submarines to deadly watch towers.

Fuel is used during flight, and is represented by a diminishing bar.

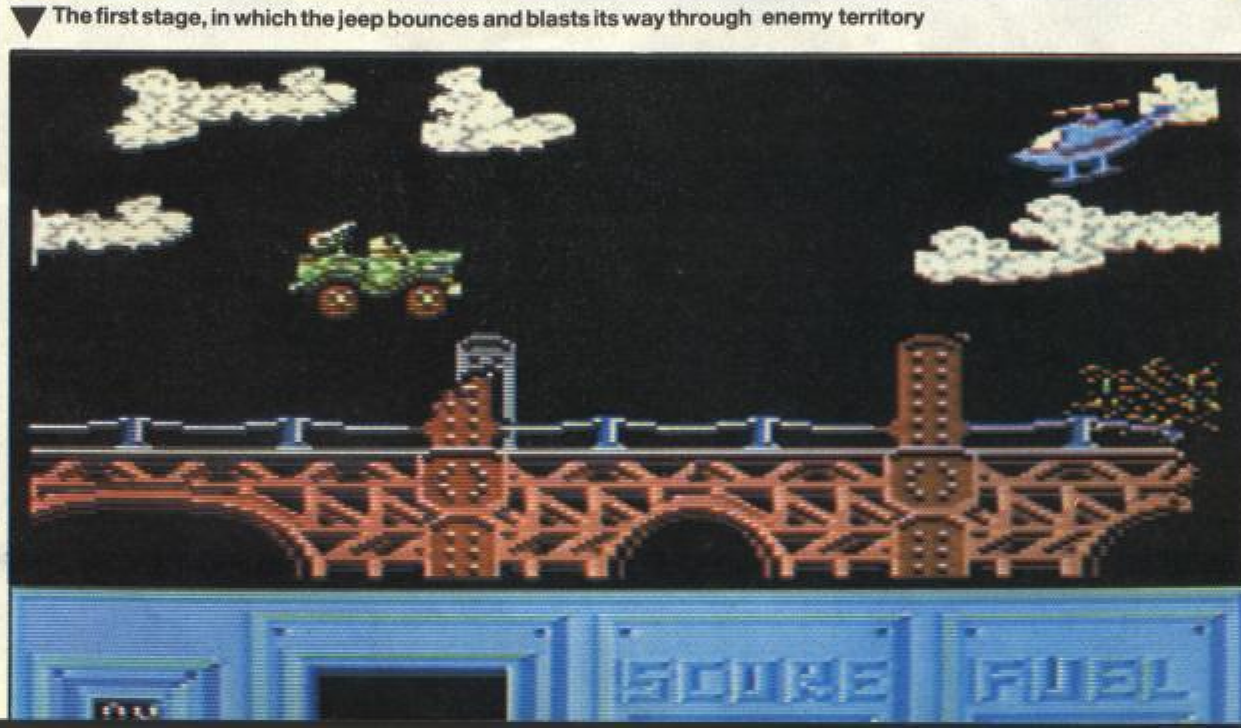


▲ Taking control of the chopper in the third stage, the heroic Captain engages enemy submarines

▼ With seven lives remaining, the Captain of the SOS has made his way to the end of the fifth stage . . .



▼ The first stage, in which the jeep bounces and blasts its way through enemy territory





At first I was frustrated to a point where I felt like smashing the computer. There's something very unjust about being mercilessly mown down by enemy fire time and time again when the end of a level is literally seconds away, especially as you have to go all the way back to the beginning again. What's even more annoying is that the game still manages to remain addictive – I suppose that the frustration make you want to win even more desperately. Each level takes a fair amount of cracking, but perseverence reaps its own rewards. The appeal may diminish after the first completion, but achieving the objective is an enjoyable and worthwhile task.



I was expecting a shoot 'em up, but not like this – bouncing jeeps and deadly toucans don't exactly conjure up images of war-torn battlefields and army manoeuvres. But, surprisingly, it's fun – frustrating beyond belief at times, but addictive and very playable. The graphics are convincing, with some detailed and colourful characters on all the sections. I especially like the helicopter stages which are immensely attractive and playable. All in all, an entertaining mixture of three different types of blasting action.



Aaaargh! This is *so* difficult. Graphically, it's very smart indeed, with some tremendous multi-parallax scrolling and suitably macho sprites. There are enough levels to keep most people happy for some time, but my main argument against its purchase is its difficulty. It's offputting at first – and second, and third . . . I'm not sure if this makes it more of a challenge or just frustrating and unplayable. I gave up after several abortive attempts, with gritted teeth and clenched fists. If you can play before buying, do so. Either way, prepare yourself for a hard time.

Failing to replenish supplies (by landing on one of the many helicopter pads) causes the chopper to crash and thus ends the mission. Landing on the pad at the end of the fourth stage reveals a secret code which allows access to the final three stages.

The final three levels are tackled on foot. Armed with a machine gun the player traverses a swamp, battles through heavily defended barracks, and finally assaults a bunker. Giant toucans and grenade throwing guerillas make the going more difficult in the marsh section, and armed guards join the fray by the time the barracks are reached. The final level takes place in the bunker where the documents are being held. Grenade throwing soldiers swarm as the player tries to locate the documents. Find them and the mission is successful, fail and the results are unthinkable . . .

PRESENTATION 78%
Pleasantly laid out and presented, although having to use the space bar is awkward and annoying.

GRAPHICS 81%
Big, bold, colourful and effective.

SOUND 69%
Unusual and amusing treatment of military jingles, plus good spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 79%
Annoyingly difficult, but still addictive.

LASTABILITY 64%
Interest may wane after the mission has been completed, but there's enough action to pass the time.

VALUE 74%
Hardly an exorbitant price for eight fun-filled stages.

OVERALL 75%
A competent blend of game styles which can be very frustrating but nonetheless playable.

BEAMRIDER

Firebird/Activision, £1.99 cass, joystick only



A huge beam matrix has formed within the vicinity of Earth and beamer ships are launching attacks on your home planet. You have been sent on a mission to infiltrate the matrix with a single aim in mind: the annihilation of all enemy craft.

Your vessel appears at the bottom of the screen, with the matrix disappearing into the distance in front of you. Control is achieved via joystick, with movement limited to hopping left and right from one beam to another.

There are seven different types of beamer ship to be dealt with, each with an individual attack pattern. The most important are the white saucers, 15 of which must be cleared from each screen before the next can be accessed.

Defending alien craft attempt to remove your ship by kamikaze attacks – collision with your vessel being fatal. Attacks become faster and more frequent as the levels progress.

Contact with yellow rejuvenators adds another ship to your reserve – however, if shot they turn red, and collision then proves fatal.

When the necessary 15 saucers have been destroyed, the Sector Sentinel appears, making its way across the top of the screen and guarded by swarms of green suicide ships. Your vessel carries three torpedoes, launched by pushing the joystick forward. A direct hit from a torpedo causes the Sentinel to explode, signalling the bonus sheet to appear. The bonus awarded is according to the level and the number of ships remaining.

The game may be played by one or two players, with the mission beginning from sectors one, five or ten, according to preference.



I can't say I'm thrilled with this ageing shoot 'em up. The basic graphics and white noise sound effects don't inspire, and the repetitive gameplay bores after a few sessions. The action may be fast, but shooting sprite after unimaginative sprite fails to spark any enthusiasm, and after a few plays the desire to go and play something else is huge. Okay, so this is budget priced, but there are plenty of other shoot 'em ups in the range which put this to shame.

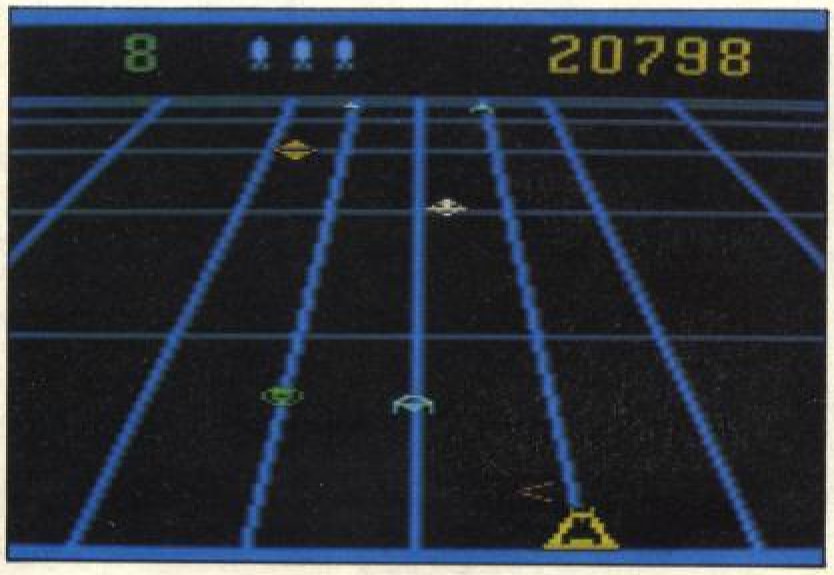


I can see why this was popular when it first came out on the 64 – and I'm sure it will be in even more demand now that it's at a budget price. The basic concept is very simple – and this is what makes Beamrider so addictive. The graphics update smoothly enough and give a perfect view of 3D perspective. Control is accurate and extremely responsive. With a budget price there is no excuse for missing out on this old favourite.



Another of my early favourites gets a new lease of life thanks to Firebird. Beamrider is a very simple shoot 'em up with strong Space Invader overtones. Graphically, it's nothing to shout about, and it is starting to show its age, but I still find it very enjoyable. The main reason being that it's one of those games which is not limited by the program: it reacts as fast as you can. On later levels the action becomes chaotic, and really gets the adrenalin pumping, making this a worthy addition to anyone's blasting collection.

▼ With eight saucers still to destroy, the pressure mounts . . .



PRESENTATION 63%
Two-player option, pause and restart features, but sadly no high-score table.

GRAPHICS 38%
Simple but effective grid and alien movement.

SOUND 30%
No music and harsh spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 59%
Simplistic and mildly addictive blasting action.

LASTABILITY 48%
Little variety, although the level of difficulty is well graded and the pace increases with proficiency.

VALUE 66%
Lots of cheap blasting on offer.

OVERALL 51%
An ageing but playable shoot 'em up, well suited to the budget range.

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GRAPPLING BYTES ON THE GRIDIRON

A round-up of available American football software, courtesy of Julian 'Ice Tray' Rignall and Paul Sumner . . .

SUPER SUNDAY

Nexus, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk

An interesting aspect of this program is that it allows any two teams which have appeared in a Superbowl final since 1966 to play against one another. Each team remains faithful to its original squad, with the players' names and their season summaries (averages, distances, completions, touchdowns etc) accurately reproduced.

As with all of the games reviewed in this piece, there is a one or two player option. The former pits the player against an 'intelligent' computer-controlled team, which in this case proved to be of considerable talent. Fixtures are contested over 20, 35 or 45 minutes of realtime action, with the match beginning when this selection has been made.

A comprehensive status display includes the current time, quarter, down, yardage, ball position and the result of the last play. Although detailed, the list is very straightforward with the current situation always accessible at a glance.

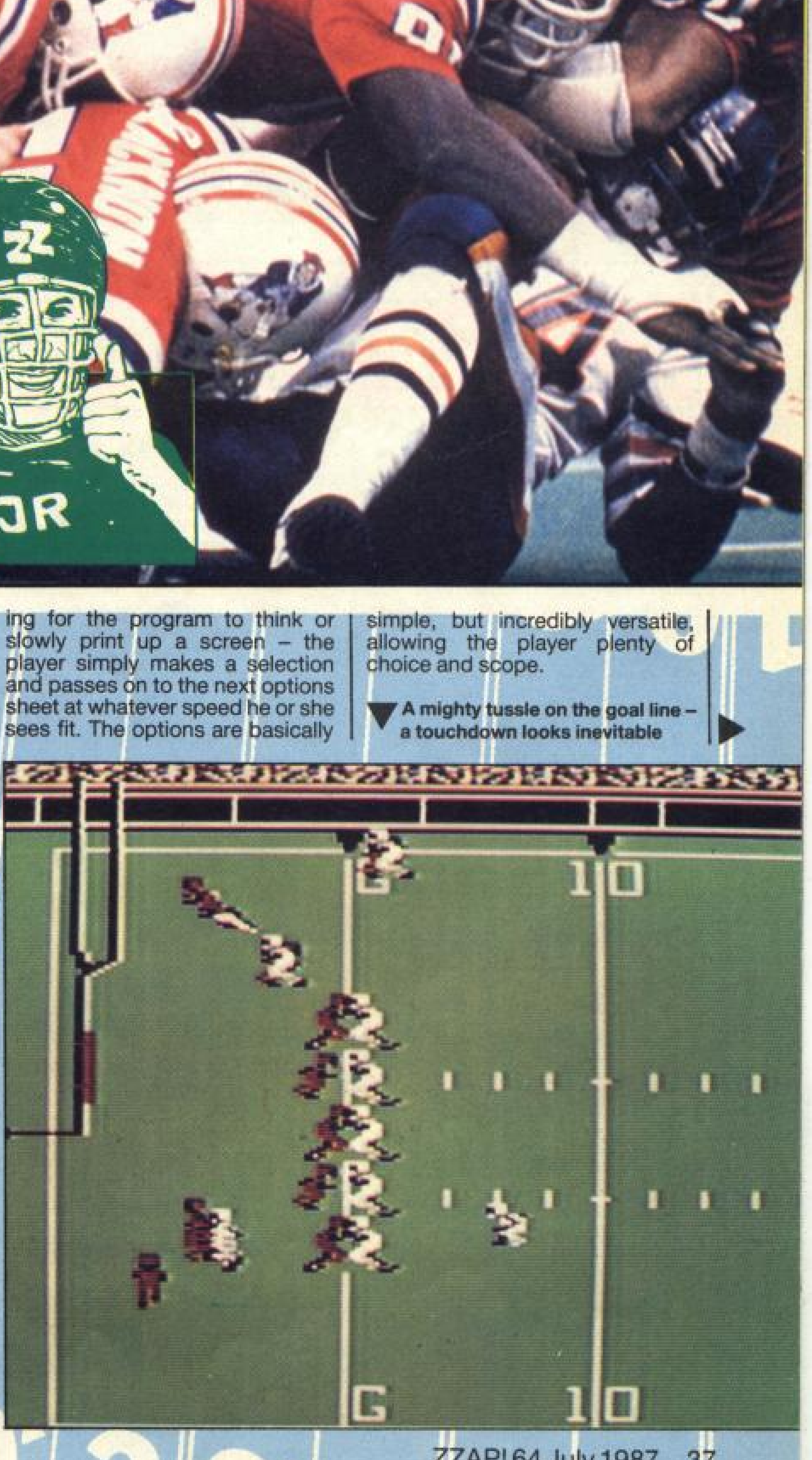
Pressing any key brings the action screen into view, with a list of 11 offensive moves displayed – three sneaks, four rushes and three passes. The next necessary choice is the scrimmage formation selection. There are three variations: pro-set, three backs or four receivers, one of which is chosen to complement the particular play. A quarterback and runner/receiver are then selected to complete the line-up.

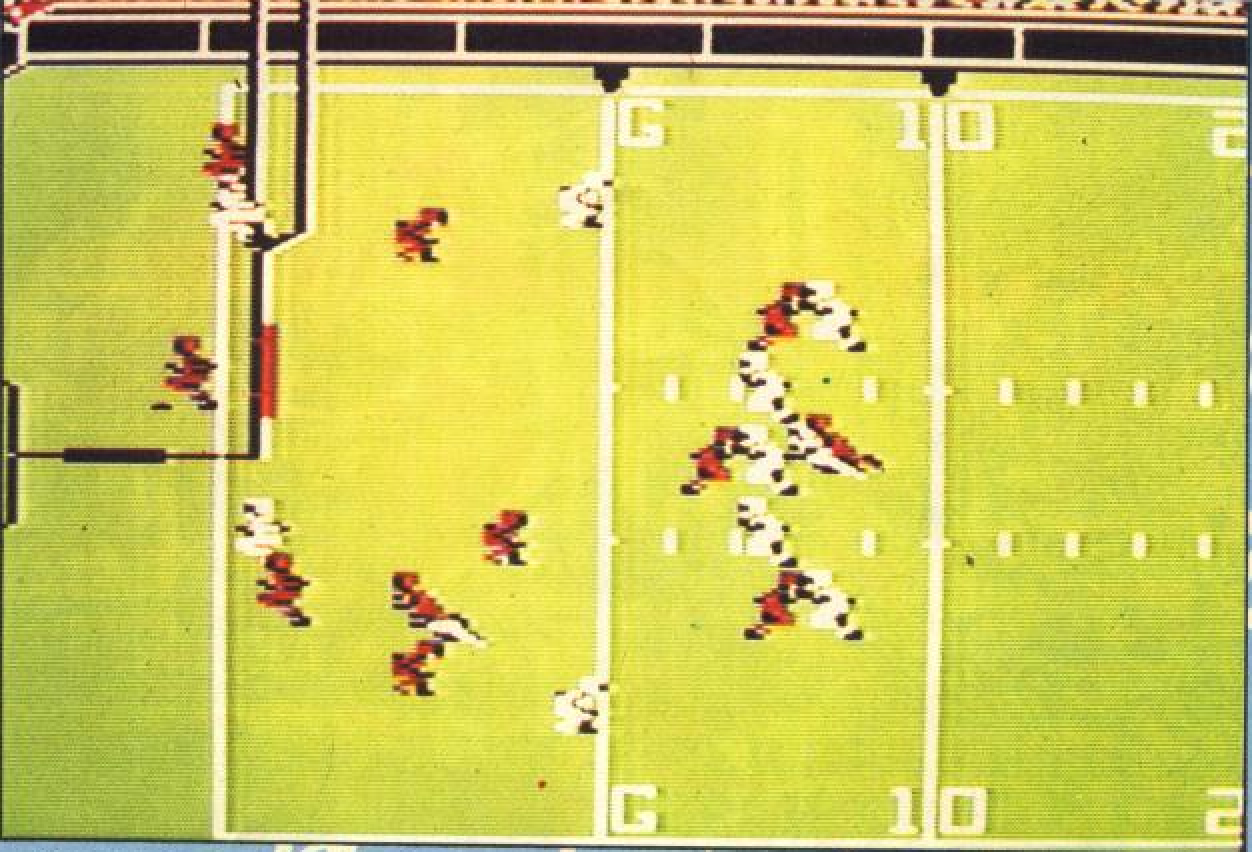
A similar series of options is used to define the defensive movement. The initial selection is between one of three basic defence patterns: run, pass or normal. These are followed by 12 specialised defence set-ups, with play beginning when all options have been chosen.

The action is displayed television style, with the sprites moving convincingly and responding perfectly to your commands. Occasional human errors including fumbles, interceptions, fouls and injuries further enhance the feeling of 'being there'.

One of *Super Sunday*'s most appealing factors is the selection process' speed. There's no waiting for the program to think or slowly print up a screen – the player simply makes a selection and passes on to the next options sheet at whatever speed he or she sees fit. The options are basically simple, but incredibly versatile, allowing the player plenty of choice and scope.

▼ A mighty tussle on the goal line – a touchdown looks inevitable ▶





▲ Out-and-out action in *Super Sunday*. Channel Four was never as exciting as this . . .

The instructions are excellent, fully explaining the program's thoughtfully designed and beautifully presented workings. Add this and the superlative gameplay to the fact that there are 40 teams of different capabilities (giving a total of 400 different games), and you end up with something very near the American dream (the football enthusiasts' variety that is).

JR

Super Sunday is one of the easiest American football games to use, yet despite its simplistic structure it contains every single element of the game. You take part in every single play, with the outcome always dependent on your choice – not on a random computer-generated element. The computer provides a worthy opponent, even attempting a field goal when there aren't enough seconds left for a successful drive! Realistic graphics have never really been achieved successfully in an American football program, but Super Sunday gives you well animated graphics and a decent smattering of colour. Quite simply, this is the most realistic and atmospheric American football game on the 64 so far.

PS

PRESENTATION 95%
User-friendly and includes all of the game's many aspects.

DISPLAY 82%
Very convincing. A little on the thin side, but successful in generating all the excitement of an American football game.

PLAYABILITY 93%
A joy to play, combining depth and simplicity perfectly.

AUTHENTICITY 96%
Oodles of correct facts and figures, 40 authentic teams and gameplay which strictly adheres to the rules.

OPPONENT 92%
Plenty of scope and variety, with the computer having the ability to play any of 40 teams.

VALUE 88%
An essential and worthy buy for any American football fan.

OVERALL 92%
A superlative product – *the* best football simulation on the market.

GFL CHAMPIONSHIP FOOTBALL

Activision, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

Superb visual presentation is *Championship Football*'s major feature, with the action displayed via an unusual 'through the helmet' 3D view. The player becomes involved in every play, whether attacking or defensive, taking a central role in the proceedings. This arcade-orientated action is complemented by a strategy section involving the planning of offensive and defensive moves.

Initially, two teams are chosen from the 28 provided, and the duration of each quarter is set at either four or seven minutes. With these parameters set, the match begins.

The screen is split into three display areas. The largest shows match details such as score, time elapsed, timeouts and the ball's position, while the others contain a comprehensive and extensive list of offensive an defensive plays.

At the beginning of an offensive play the user scrolls through the list and chooses a manoeuvre. The screen displays a view through the player's helmet and the computer quarterback yells instructions – although the speech is grating and somewhat garbled (a bit like a Dalek with marbles in his voice-box). When play begins, the player uses the joystick to follow a series of arrows at the bottom of the screen – failure to comply results in a swift tackle or incomplete pass.

Defensive plays are chosen in the same way, although the player doesn't partake in the action and is forced to watch from an offensive player's viewpoint – often a nail-biting situation.



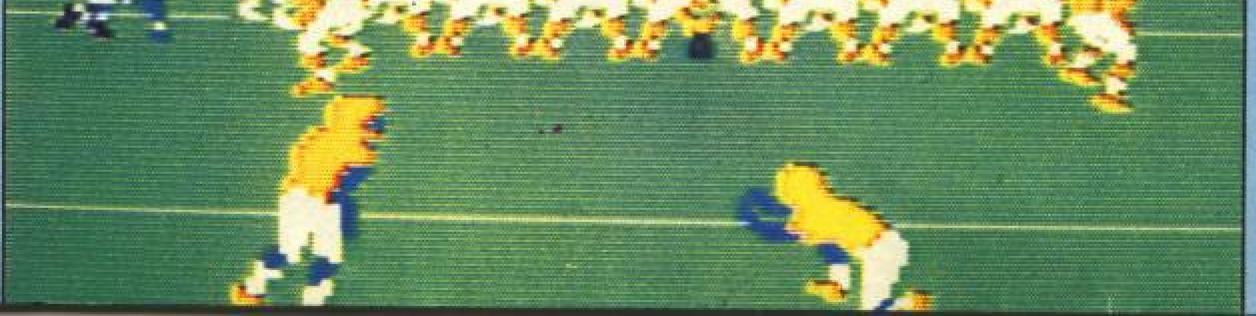
▲ First down and inches . . . a receiver's eye view of the action

Other moves, including the kick-off, punt and 'extra point plays' are also executed in the first person with the player taking the role of receiver or kicker. When the opponent is punting or going for a PAT, the player's job is to break through the line and block the kick. Following each move, the screen reverts to the tri-display and another is selected.

It must be stated that this is an admirable attempt at an original idea, but unfortunately there isn't quite enough freedom within the arcade sequences. Most moves are rigorously dictated by the arrows, and there's very little variety in the moves that *do* allow the player a free reign. Having said that, there's an excellent tactical simulation in there, appreciated best when two humans are toggling the joysticks. Try it first before exchanging any cash.

JR

An attempt at a field goal . . . at that distance?! ▼



TOUCHDOWN FOOTBALL

Ariolasoft, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk

Touchdown Football gives the user a direct hand in the play by letting him or her take direct joystick control over one of the players. The match is played over a scrolling panoramic pitch, with the duration of each quarter set between five and 15 minutes. As soon as the time factor has been decided the players appear and a coin is tossed to determine who kicks off.

Play action is chosen by moving the joystick in one of eight directions, each signifying an action, and pressing the fire button selecting it. From this choice another eight specialised moves are made available and one is selected in similar fashion.

When the move has been planned it is started with a press of the fire button. The ball is thrown to the quarterback, who catches it automatically. Joystick control is then handed to the player, who can move the sprite anywhere on screen. Pressing the fire button throws the ball to the player defined in the options screen. When on the defensive, one of the linebackers is placed under joystick control.

On paper, this looks like something really special, but unfortunately it just doesn't hang together at all. The graphics are nothing short of appalling – the players look like a convention of hunchbacks, the animation is poor and the scrolling is reminiscent of a major earth tremor. The response to joystick is very sluggish indeed and consequently the program is frustrating to play. What the programmers are trying to achieve is admirable, but unfortunately the playability element has fallen somewhere along on the wayside – a shame because the construction and presentation is otherwise neat.

JR

I'm not very impressed with this ugly simulation. The graphics are chunky and the player's animation is unconvincing. Play is slow, and despite the easy to use menus I still found myself getting frustrated. The arcade section fails miserably, and you're left with a pretty unconvincing and unaddictive simulation.

PS

▼ Both teams huddle in preparation for a play



PRESENTATION 88%
Very easy to use menu system and well written instructions.

DISPLAY 34%
Poor, with chunky and unrealistic sprites battling across a pitch which suffers regular earthquakes.

PLAYABILITY 39%
The characters are slow to move and sluggish to respond to the joystick – frustration sets in swiftly.

AUTHENTICITY 82%
The rules are strictly adhered to, but the players are unrealistic in their movement.

OPPONENT 78%
The computer is challenging, but not unbeatable.

VALUE 39%
Grossly overpriced for what's on offer.

OVERALL 45%
A nice idea let down by its awful looks and playability.

This is without a doubt the most graphically impressive of all the gridiron games. The look is very realistic and solid, endowing the multitude of moves with a great atmosphere. The trouble is that I only really felt a degree of control over a few of them, and consequently found myself getting frustrated. The one player game is rather boring and unaddictive, but the two player option provides a lot of fun and a great degree of challenge.

PS

PRESENTATION 90%
Slick and thoughtful all round.

DISPLAY 90%
Convincing 3D graphics relate the action extremely well.

PLAYABILITY 76%
Somewhat limited and repetitive arcade screens, but the tactical game is fine.

AUTHENTICITY 95%
The rules are strictly adhered to, and the execution is very realistic all-round.

OPPONENT 93%
The computer is a tough nut to crack, with twenty-eight varied teams to challenge one another.

VALUE 79%
A good investment for those who are unable to partake in the sport – and wish they could.

OVERALL 82%
Plenty of padding surrounds a fine strategic game. Try it out if you think you can stand the play limitations.

ON-FIELD FOOTBALL

Firebird, £1.99

Originally released by Activision back in June of 1985, this forerunner to *GFL Football* was one of the first fully-blown American football games to appear on the market. Now it has been exhumed by Firebird, and is reappearing on their budget label, along with *On-Field Baseball* and *On-Court Tennis*.

The player chooses a quarterback, wide receiver and tight end from the footballers on offer. Each has different characteristics and thus play is affected by their abilities and disabilities.

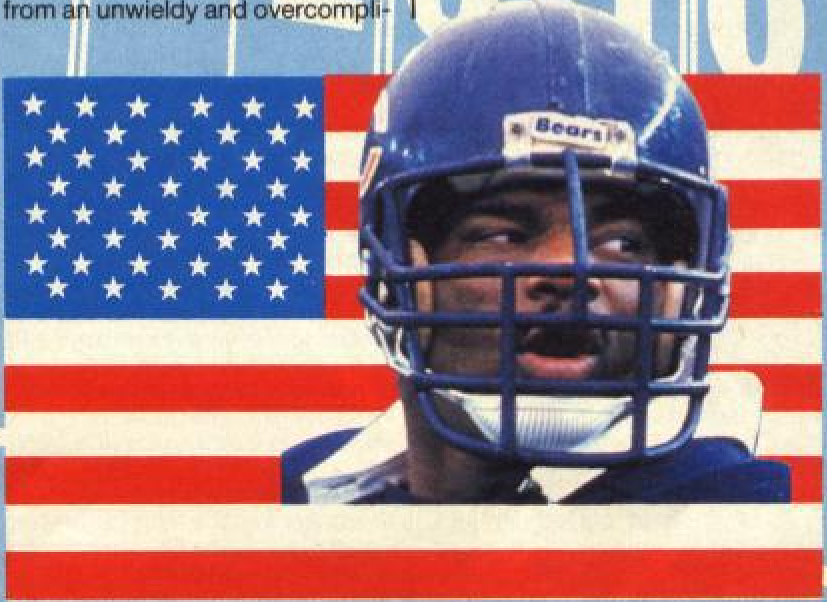
Control is executed in similar fashion to *Touchdown Football*, with one team member placed under joystick control. When the play is over, the next is selected from an unwieldy and overcomplicated series of options. Defensive plays are also chosen using the same menu system, and a linebacker is placed directly under joystick control.

On-Field Football is the cheapest American football game on the market, but it's also one of the oldest and most unplayable. The graphics are terrible, and the players look like little fat Lego men. Even worse is the fact that there are only four players per team – what a joke! The computer opponent always reacts in the same way, so as soon as you work out the move which gains the most yardage it can be repeated time and time again – Y-A-W-N . . .

JR

I didn't see this the first time around – and I'm glad I didn't. The whole package is badly designed, comprising an unwieldy menu system, a pathetic and predictable computer opponent who is a cinch to beat, awful playability and terrible graphics. Okay, so it's budget priced, but personally I don't even think it rates as budget material.

PS



PRESENTATION 40%
Badly laid out, with a cumbersome menu system and little thought for the user.

DISPLAY 29%
Bland and blocky sprites add very little to the action.

PLAYABILITY 27%%
Clumsy menus and awkward control method for the players.

AUTHENTICITY 43%
The presence of rules is marred by the fact that there are only four players per team.

OPPONENT 25%
A complete cabbage. A doddle to beat within one or two plays.

VALUE 43%
The lowest priced, and the lowest rated.

OVERALL 34%
A boring simulation which offers little playability, depth or action.

SUPERBOWL

Ocean, £9.95 cass

Although this is now realistically out of date, being the 'officially licensed' game of the 1985/86 Superbowl (New England Patriots vs Chicago Bears), it's still neat, combining simple strategy and arcade action to bring home the thrills of the season's most important match. *Superbowl* is designed for both the novice and expert, and comes with an audio cassette explaining the rules. The emphasis is on the player's ability to control the action directly via the joystick, rather than setting out the moves and watching the computer depict the ensuing results.

The action is controlled through a comprehensive series of pop-down menus, with the player to be put under joystick control chosen when the move has been selected.

Now the action turns to the right, where an aerial view of the football field contains pathetic miniature dots to represent the players. A press of the fire button 'snaps' the ball to the quarterback, and the player guides his on-screen counterpart through the hordes of opposing players. If a passing play has been selected beforehand and the quarterback hasn't passed the line of scrimmage, the ball is passed by pressing the fire button. Control automatically passes to the catcher as soon as he receives the ball.

A window expands on the left hand side of the screen after each play, replaying the entire move using three-quarter screen high characters, just like you'd see on a giant scoreboard. If you don't wish to see this, a simple press of the fire button skips to the set-up menu.

While defending, the allocated player can either move into an intercepting position or mark an opposing player in a threatening position. Punts and kicks are executed by wiggling the joystick back and forth to increase a 'power bar', and pressing the fire button boots the ball when enough energy has been accrued.

Superbowl is an immediately impressive program which is well designed and beautifully presented, but has one fundamental flaw – its inability to compete against a human. The computer opponent is a complete pushover for anyone more than a complete novice, and consequently the one player game becomes boring very quickly. However, as a two player game it's superb – a true arcade style head to head battle. Go for it if you have a human handy to challenge you.

JR

When Superbowl *came out a year ago I was astounded by its slick presentation and ease of use. However, compared to its current competitors it's really very superficial. The lack of variation probably puts paid to any lasting satisfaction, as there are only two teams to choose from and the game screen is very simple. The graphics are pleasing and the replay sequences still amaze me today, but the atmosphere could still have been improved – perhaps by some better sound effects.* Superbowl *is a good choice for newcomers, but the more hardened fanatic could be disappointed by the lack of depth.*

PS



PRESENTATION 93%
Easy to use menu system, complemented by the useful audio cassette instructions.

DISPLAY 74%
The main playing screen graphics are pathetic, but are more than compensated for by the superb replay screens.

PLAYABILITY 84%
Best played with two players – the computer opponent is totally inept.

AUTHENTICITY 83%
All the razzamatazz and pomp of the occasion have been successfully captured.

OPPONENT 23%
Sadly, the computer opponent plays like an idiot.

VALUE 76%
A glossy package with a favourable price tag.

OVERALL 80%
A brilliant two player game, but only a novice would find the computer opponent challenging.

HEADCOACH

Addictive Games, £8.95 cass

Head Coach is a transatlantic *Football Manager*-style program in which the player takes control of a team and aims to win the Superbowl.

To begin, the player picks a team and sets their skill level; either Novice, Rookie, Veteran or All-Pro. The 32-man squad consists of offensive, defensive and special teams, listed on separate screens which show each player's age, skill rating, fitness and form.

A 'Midweek' section gives the coach an opportunity to swap existing players for those available on the open market. This trading is followed by a build-up to the



weeks' game, including a display of the opposing team's strength and vital statistics. The subsequent team selection is a rather long-winded and dull process, made more annoying by the slow moving cursor and huge keyboard buffer.

The action takes place on a representative pitch with the players depicted as inanimate matchstick men. Eight different actions (four defensive and four offensive) are made available, and the result of each move is ineptly play-acted by the skinny on-screen counterparts. This portrayal is completely unconvincing, with little player movement and variation from move to move. Further still, the duration of the play is never longer than a second or two, and the diabolical graphics fail to generate any excitement, action or atmosphere – three vital factors. Worst of all is the unforgivable disregard of the rules – if a team fails to progress ten yards within two downs the ball changes possession. Where have the third and fourth downs gone?

The match is played straight through (without quarters or halves), and is quickly followed by the week's results and league tables. At the end of the 12 game season, six division winners and one extra team from each conference enter a series of play-offs to determine the Superbowl finalists. Following a rest period of 20 days the next season begins.

A LOAD/SAVE option operates throughout, and on the whole the game structure is superb. The idea of picking teams and progressing from season to season is great, but unfortunately the execution is very poor. Inaccurate, frustrating and boring gameplay, annoying delays and over-complication ruin a potentially brilliant product.

JR

I can't really see any self-respecting American football enthusiast taking Head Coach *seriously. Behind the complicated facade of team selection and status checking lies a very simple game. The gameplay includes a number of inaccuracies – including the 'two down play' and lack of quarters – and the choice of moves is comparatively limited. What niggled the most is that if you're supposed to be the head coach, why don't you have more control over the game – such as the power to call a time-out?* Head Coach *is irritatingly inexact and and frustratingly limited.*

PS

PRESENTATION 56%
A good set of options and excellent structure are tarnished by the slow and cumbersome execution.

DISPLAY 21%
Tiny, inanimate characters are used to portray the action, and very unconvincing they are too.

PLAYABILITY 39%
The limited moves provide very little player involvement, and frustration sets in all too quickly.

AUTHENTICITY 35%
Some important basics of American football have been needlessly left out, and player names are rather unrealistic.

OPPONENT 81%
Effectively 12 different teams which can be tackled over four different skill levels. Sometimes the computer's advantage is occasionally gained through the limitations of the game rather than its own skill.

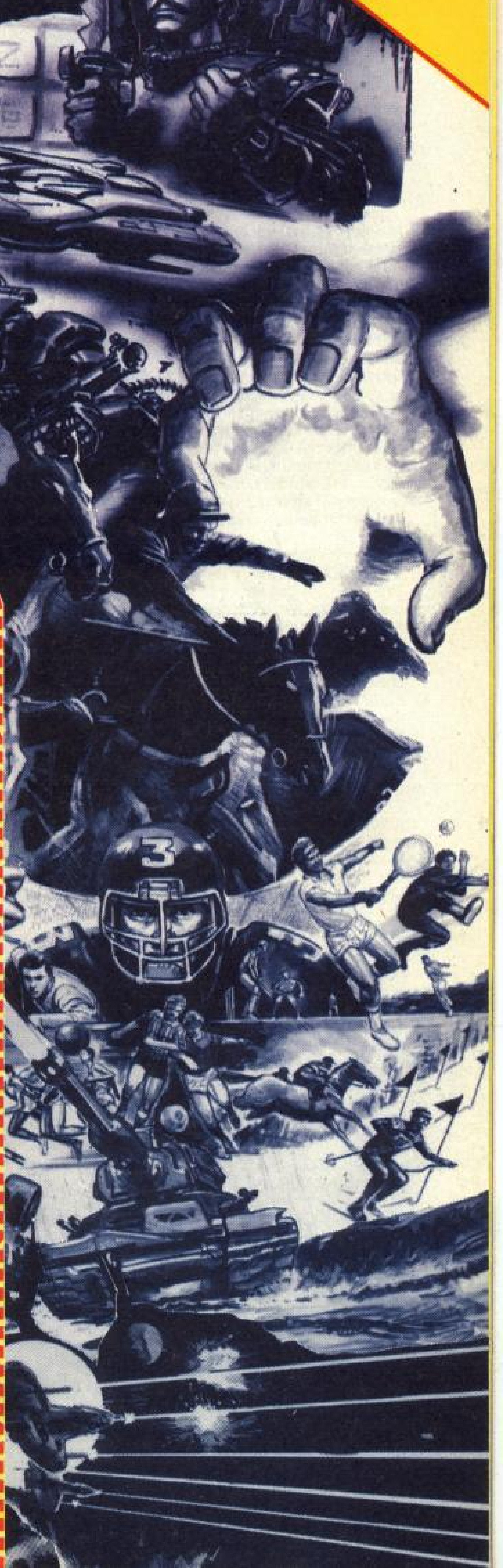
VALUE 31%
Overpriced for a fundamentally flawed simulation.

OVERALL 37%
A nice idea, but it looks hopeless and antiquated beside the likes of *Super Sunday*.

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MENTAL PROCREATION

By Andrew Braybrook

Monday 13th April
It's about time I had a proper pause mode in the game, so that I can return to the title screen, or quit to the monitor properly. All I have to do is round up the routines that ought to be left running in pause mode (colour updates for instance), and ensure that no routines involving object update are called. As mentioned last month the sprite display system (or multi-plexor) expects new sprite positions to have been calculated every cycle to ensure smooth movement. During pause mode everything should stay still (partly so that magazines can take screen shots), so the easiest way to achieve this is not to call the movement routines. Trouble is, the sprite system then receives no information regarding sprite positions and shuts down, so they all disappear – not good.

Tuesday 14th April
The interrupt-driven sprite system was slightly amended to tell it to use the previous sprite positions if no new ones arrive. I can therefore now pause the game or carry out mega-long calculations in the knowledge that all the sprites will remain on screen. They may not move a lot, but it's better than disappearing completely. Thus the pause mode is now implemented. Work has also continued on the control mode to allow the ship to be steered whilst operating its engines. The three parallax star-fields all move at different speeds and can be made to spin quite merrily. The ship's speed will vary depending on configuration and engine mounted, but I don't want any sluggish combinations. I hate games where the control mode prevents you from doing the job in hand.

I also enhanced the object handler to ignore non-existent objects rather than process them anyway. I used to have to hide them off-screen! I have created my first three classes of object:

1. dead objects.
2. fixed on-screen objects.
3. docking bay sprites that move away from the ship.

This completes the un-docking sequence so the main port slides off the screen as you leave it – it's better than having it following you around.

One design change now has the ship positioned on screen left to give a larger area in front of the tractor beam unit at the ship's right.

Thursday 16th April
Put in some of the text for the title screen and high score table. With the giant-sized text and only two lines of characters available I shall only be able to print one line of the Hall of Fame at a time. This does have the advantage that I don't have to fit the whole table on one screen. I will allow for ten entries for now, eight digits per score and three letters of initials. There's not room on one line for a full name.

In preparation for the title screen I had to define some more characters: the joysticks and player symbols and a double width space. I also put in the colour and monochrome symbols, but I just remembered that I won't be needing them because there won't be a colour option this time – it isn't necessary. Carefully planned painting and decorating will make the game work on either type of TV.

I also put in the tractor beam firing mechanism which spits out a sort of cloud, but I don't like the graphics. I may change the whole routine to run that if the graphics require it. It's no good just putting up with a routine because you sweated blood over it – if it doesn't work then it has to go.

Tuesday 21st April
Put in some more text for the title screen and a high-score decode table. I may need to put in a save to disk routine and it's best to keep the amount to be saved as small as possible – we all know how long the breeze block takes. As long as I can decode this data ready for screen printing fairly quickly I can put in ten entries quite happily, maybe even 20. I like full zero-suppression on scores, it gives a more professional look – better than hundreds of leading zeroes. After all, calculators stopped displaying leading zeroes soon after the Sinclair Cambridge, and that was back in the 14th Century!

I've also put in the redocking sequence except that the docking bay sprites that scrolled off so nicely arrive back on screen in a state of minor disarray. Well, all right – a complete shambles! This smells of an index to the individual parts getting corrupted somehow.

Wednesday 22nd April
Yesterday's corrupted docking bay was caused by what we technically refer to as 'raster overrun'. Put in layman's terms that means 'trying to do too much in too short a time'. I always wondered what would happen if I ran out of CPU time. This was caused by attempting to fade out the grids while running 21 sprites. I don't actually need to do this as the sprites are held off-screen anyway, so I just set them up after the fade-in instead of before.

Tried putting in larger front-layer stars, but they looked too square. Changed the tractor beam to be more of a *Defender*-type laser. This required a total rewrite of the firing routine but it looks much better. The process involved required first working out the routine, testing it and finally tuning in – that is, slowing down some animation to alternate game cycles so that it is more obvious what is happening. I considered making it a continuous beam for repeated presses but it loses its effect. I rigged the control mode to fire the tractor beam from either the unit itself or from the engines section, which removes the necessity to keep running across the ship all the time.

I also had to increase the time taken to initiate the dematerialisation, as it was triggering too easily by accident. There's nothing worse than dematerialising to another part of the universe just as you are nipping out for a cuppa. There are quite a number of functions allowed to the joystick while in the engine section, about the same as in *Paradroid* (move, transfer and fire).

Thursday 23rd April
Did some sprites for the photon weaponry. I think I'll use three different brightnesses or colours and a number of different sizes and sound effects for them. This will enhance the difference between the weapons system. The enemy will be using similar weaponry.

To implement the weapons I need to set them up on the ship, so I've been working out what sort of a system I need to select new lumps for the ship. I'll need an installation system, a 'commission parts to be built' system, and a 'scrap existing parts' system.

Monday 27th April
Started putting in the self-fired weaponry. There are three stages of initialisation to co-ordinate. First, the original ship layout set-up which decides what weapons are available, then the individual gun details have to be accessed when the weapon is activated, and finally the actual firing of the weapon to initiate a bullet. This caused some confusion as the chances of a game still working is inversely proportional to the number of instructions added. So I decided to forego the first stage of weapon set-up, as this can be rigged to work using the monitor.

Had a long duel with the assembler again when it decided that I wasn't allowed to modify some code at a Procedure Name. All subsequent labels were apparently not in the same places on the second pass. How does it know? And why is it looking anyway? ST and I decided that the assembler is suffering from bad programming. I put in a second label at the same place as the first and now it's happy. I reckon that will probably earn the assembler the Mickey Mouse award for April.

Tried out the weapons system. Bit of space station drifted out of the guns in a fairly random direction. Two different guns produced different effects . . . all wrong, but still . . . Decided that it's time to print off a few routines for reference. Going grey waiting for printout.

Tuesday 28th April
Fixed the bugs in the bullet routine. It's much easier when there's a listing in front of you. The sequential firing gun is a bit of a disappointment – it works so well on the title screen, releasing particles one or two cycles apart in a circular motion . . . but the simultaneous firing makes up for it. Four or eight bullets released in a ring for mucho devastation.

By dinner-time the fundamental flaw had reared its ugly head. The control mode is basically unwieldy and generally all-round difficult to use. A quick pint down at The Chequers soon sorted this out. The problem was that controlling a weapon system means leaving the engine section ('Och Cap'n'). Thus you're left as a sitting duck on the screen just hitting fire for all you're worth, with no means of movement, just relying on the meanies walking into your line of fire – not particularly exciting, I trust you'll agree.

The solution is to allow movement of the ship from any weapon system. This allows movement while not firing, and temporarily locks out movement while giving the enemy a pasting. The latter ensures that you don't fire a joystick-directed bullet and immediately hare after it. By locking out the movement I only mean that it won't allow alterations to the current direction, not that the ship will stop! This also frees up the functions on the

engine unit, which is now only used to dematerialise back to the docking bay. I can also remove the fire tractor beam from the engine room routine which was attempting to cover up the inadequacies of the control mode.

The assembler definitely gets the April Mickey Mouse award for producing buckets of error messages on lines of perfectly good code, just for missing out a simple directive on a preceding line which it could have assumed to be present if it had any idea about user-friendliness. Even the COBOL compilers on the IBM mainframe could cope with this one, and they just love producing error messages like: 'Full stop missing, assumed present', followed rapidly by: 'Superfluous full stop encountered, assumed not present!'

Remind me to write the next game in COBOL – it's wonderful!

Wednesday 29th April
I put in the system block display routine today. There can be up to eight system blocks on the ship's hull which carry out various functions and enhance the ships capabilities. There's a twirly energy display and a current charge indicator. This routine also handles system block explosion animation, and runs at one frame every four cycles. So, by doing the animation on cycles based on the block number, it won't have to run more than two explosions at once. It doesn't seem to eat much CPU time anyway. If I ran it on interrupts it wouldn't take any time at all because as every programmer knows, the way to save CPU time is to run everything on interrupt. This takes no time at all because interrupts are free. As soon as an IRQ is detected the CPU immediately switches to 20 GigaHertz mode. Only kidding . . . I'm just bored of people telling me that they 'run the scrolling on interrupts', or 'poll the joystick on interrupts' – it means nothing but it sounds impressive.

Back to the system blocks . . . they can have different colours, which requires colour RAM update, so the addresses of these have to be noted by a previously executed routine which set up the ship's data. Colour RAM and screen RAM locations are mathematically related, and the assembler is awfully good at subtraction so this is no problem.

I had to optimise the grid fade-out routine to make it run faster, the docking sequence was running out of time, as indicated by my coloured order stripes. By optimise I mean fiddle it to execute quicker, which usually involves doubling the amount of code or using self-modifying code or both! I wish to admit here and now that self-modifying code is disgusting and very difficult to debug, but a good assembler makes mistakes less likely. There's nothing like a good assembler, and my assembler is nothing like a good assembler!

Rounded off the day by amending the sprite editor. It has a really . . . what's the word . . . 'unusual' selection of default colours – white purple and cyan. It also uses the border to indicate which colour you're painting with. This is rather silly, as a bright border completely alters the on-screen colours. These problems were fairly easy to solve as they all use the VIC video registers, so I just had to look for where it set the border colour and tell it to use black. The editor also has an annoying habit of printing in black, regardless of background colour. On a black background this is no use to man or beast – hack!

Friday 1st May
Started putting in the weapon and system selection routine which includes total ship replacement, commissioning, installing and scrapping of weapons and systems. I will need a means of regulating real time so that units can't be commissioned quickly by cheating. The selection mechanism must cross-check various lists of parts available, with parts being built and spaces on the ship to fit all these goodies.

I got out the *Paradroid* listing to see how the console logging-on routines worked. *Morpheus* will be allowing updating of data, so it must be done carefully. Maybe it should just produce update records for the overnight batch to run?

I'll confine all input to joystick only, and without an on-screen pointer. Although I am more sympathetic to mice and icons these days, there's a time and place for everything. I wouldn't use them just because they're fashionable – they must be functional.

I've got it displaying the right headings so far, and for most of the categories it studies the appropriate data and reports whether there are systems or weapons available or present. It's taken me a long time to figure out how to clear the sprites from the previous screen. After all the trouble with them disappearing when there wasn't time to update them, now I can't get rid of them! Even brute force and ignorance didn't work the first time. Got rid of them in the end though – I'll not be outwitted by a couple of sprites.

Tuesday 5th May
Chief test pilot and critic Robert Orchard had his first look, the atmosphere was not entirely unlike a Del Monte advert. De Man from Del Monte, he say: 'control mode eez not working wery well.'

We also decided that the ship is too wide. Suggestions of allowing it to flip onto its side to fit through narrow gaps were severely dealt with. The weapons are too near the edge to see the full effect, and meanies approaching from the top do not give enough warning.

So today is shrink the ship day. I removed the connecting tunnel to the weapon stations and cut down their width. The only reason they were so big to start with was to allow me to separate the harsh white highlight along the top edge from the coloured weapon ports. In the event I made the weapons ports white as well so I can combine the two in the same graphics space. A full-width ship is now reduced to 13 characters high from 19. It looks a little more streamlined now. One of the effects was that the ship passed over the grid, which it doesn't do in its present form, as it doesn't reach. I moved the grids in slightly to restore that effect. This made the docking port sprites look overly large so I cut them down too. I had wanted to reduce the number of sprites on-screen anyway. The game has to run on an NTSC C64 as used in the good ole US of A. Their C64s run about 16% slower on raster-synchronised games because their TV sets have to spit out 60 frames per second as opposed to our 50. Offset by this is the fact that their C64s actually run slightly faster (not a lot of people know that). Thus everything I run in the game for the European version has to have 16% spare time at least. I can use that time for increasing sundry items like the number of background stars, anything that can be altered once the game has loaded in and had a chance to sniff around and adjust to its surroundings.

I've also been tuning up the control mode. It's now a maze of delays and decisions, all in an attempt to make it transparent to the player. I rigged the weapons to remember the last-fired direction to reduce joystick-bashing. It also helps to differentiate between the functions of firing or leaving the weapon. I sometimes wonder whether I should keep a badly tuned version around to emphasise the fact that the game has actually been tuned up properly.

I managed to wreck the starfield completely in an attempt to improve its randomness – all the stars went and hid off-screen! Further adjustments put all to rights, so now the stars are tied to the screen with no extra off-screen areas. Any star leaving on the left will arrive on the right, but at a different height. Similarly, stars are re-shuffled vertically. The only purpose of the starfield is to give an indication of speed and direction, which it does admirably. Having done this I can reduce the number of on-screen stars from 30 to 18 and it still looks like the original number.

ST and I have devised the ultimate cheat mode to incorporate. The most comprehensive POKE of all time. Just hit any key on the keyboard, the score will set to all nine and it will print 'GAME OVER'. Just what is the point of an infinite lives POKE? The game is supposed to be challenging entertainment, not a boring wander through the graphics. If you want graphics, go and watch a film. It's not winning that counts, it's how you play the game.

Wednesday 6th May
Adjusted the starfield again to produce more distant particles and less close ones. This should enhance the effect of depth. I couldn't really spot the difference, but at least I feel better knowing that it's doing it properly.

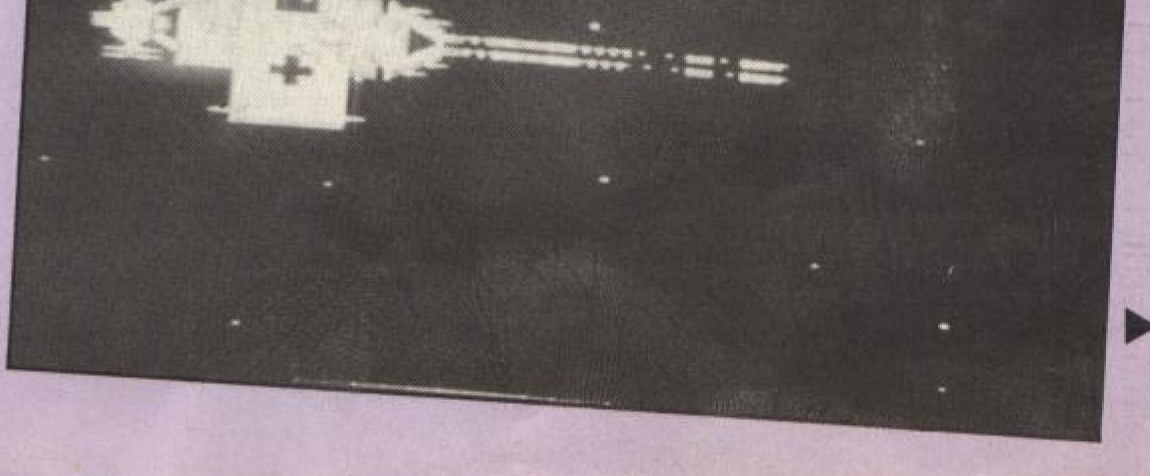
I've put in the hull selection system but left out the bit where I have to pay for it. This makes the testing easier. The actual gameplay mechanism just gets in the way of program debugging.

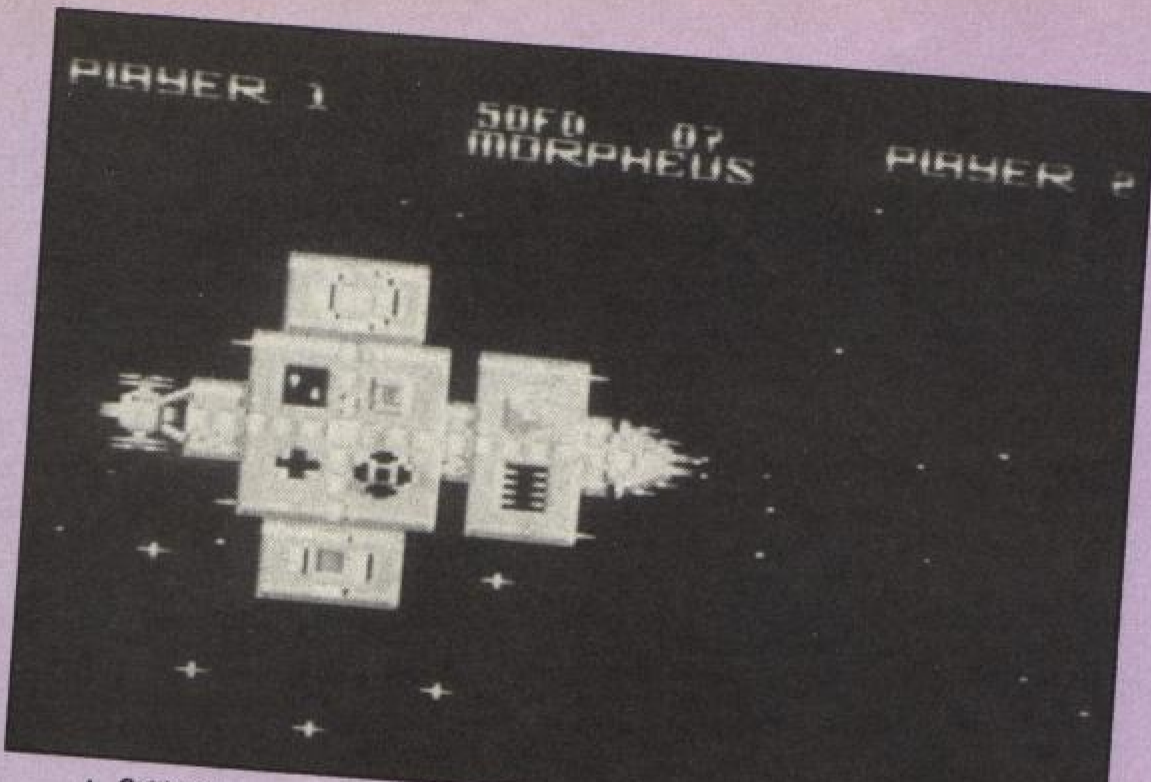
Thursday 7th May
Put in some more code for upgrading the ship, namely selection, installation and scrapping of on-board systems. This appears to be working after a fashion. It did hiccup a couple of times and actually crashed the machine, something that rarely happens these days.

Eventually disaster struck. I filled up the 384K RAM disk on the Opus with assembler files, so the marvellous assembler just quietly gives up. It doesn't actually report an error that it couldn't finish writing a file, it waits until the next stage falls over when it unexpectedly reaches the end of the file. A massive re-organisation followed to split the main code into two smaller lumps. This involved isolating the code that is unlikely to change from the stuff that I'm still working on. Of course, saying that a piece of code is finished is a guarantee that it'll need changing tomorrow at the latest, but it's time to be brave. This makes the assembly time shorter as well – it was getting boring, taking over two minutes.

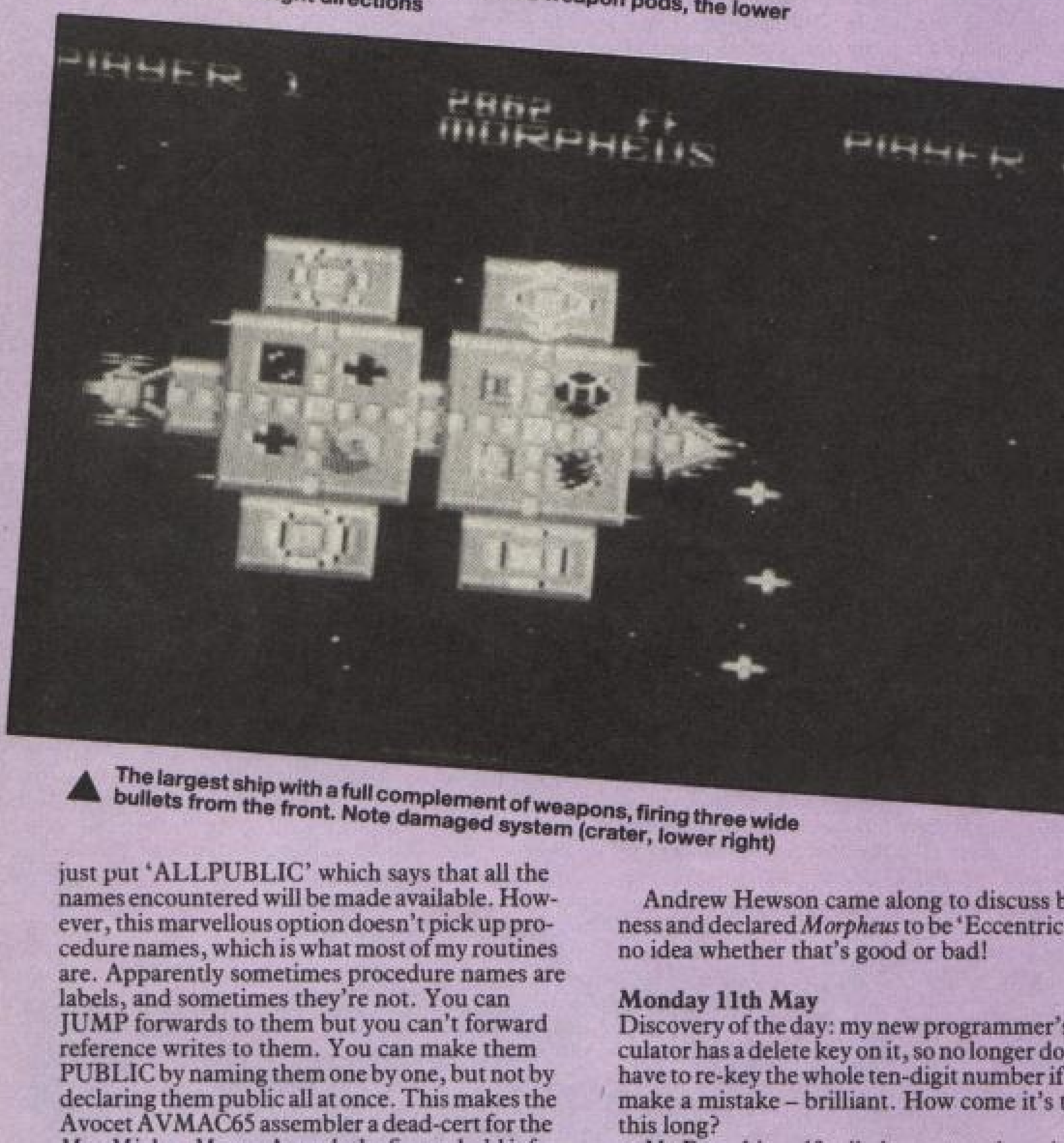
Having a lot of trouble linking the two modules together. All my routines have gone undefined, even though I can see them in front of me. Come seven in the evening, ST and I suss out what it is. In order to not have to key in all the routine names to make them known to other modules you can

▼ A small ship fires two deadly toothpaste tubes, which are quickly decaying





▲ Getting bigger . . . the ship has now almost reached its full size – with three extra weapons and new streamlined weapon pods, the lower firing bullets in eight directions



▲ The largest ship with a full complement of weapons, firing three wide bullets from the front. Note damaged system (crater, lower right)

just put 'ALLPUBLIC' which says that all the names encountered will be made available. However, this marvellous option doesn't pick up procedure names, which is what most of my routines are. Apparently sometimes procedure names are labels, and sometimes they're not. You can JUMP forwards to them but you can't forward reference writes to them. You can make them PUBLIC by naming them one by one, but not by declaring them public all at once. This makes the Avocet AVMAC65 assembler a dead-cert for the May Mickey Mouse Award, the first to hold it for two months in a row. I can't see anything beating this!

Friday 8th May

This scrap weapon facility is causing an embarassment. It's elevated itself to a 'scrap whole program' facility! I'm not entirely sure why this is, I'll need to look at a listing.

Meantime the select system facility requires that I display an individual system. I can only display eight at once and some configurations require that I display nine on screen, so I'll have to convert the character data into sprite data. The way I've organised it requires colour changes by adding one to each bit pair in the byte with no overflow, for the multi-colour data. Rather than painstakingly separate each bit pair in turn, I worked out the logical operations to achieve this in one go.

Andrew Hewson came along to discuss business and declared *Morpheus* to be 'Eccentric'. I've no idea whether that's good or bad!

Monday 11th May

Discovery of the day: my new programmer's calculator has a delete key on it, so no longer do you have to re-key the whole ten-digit number if you make a mistake – brilliant. How come it's taken this long?

Mr Penn himself rolled up yesterday with Mr Liddon but I didn't have *Morpheus* at home so they didn't see it. It can be very dangerous showing the press very early versions, even if he was on holiday. The freshness of a game wears off, I never did get my Gold Medal for *Uridium*! Nevertheless Mr Penn suggested a recoiling gun at the front, while Mr Liddon suggested finding some food! I'm all in favour of recoiling guns, so 20 minutes of updating the code and the recoil mechanism is in and working. It's quite a small gun anyway but it comes under the 'nice touch' heading.

Found the bugs in the install and scrap sections. I was tying myself in knots trying to ensure that the right messages appear on screen, supressing later ones in favour of important early ones. This resulted in sometimes not resetting internal pointers, so having installed the last weapon it still thought there was another one left, so it picked up rogue data and fell base over apex.

Tuesday 12th May

Finally completed the set of ship enhancement features. The game now allows all functions to be used without having to fiddle anything. I haven't yet put any restrictions on commissioning new ship parts. If I put in the bit where you have to pay for them, I'll need some money, which is derived from points scored – but there's no way of scoring points at the moment!

I keep running out of RAM disk space again on the Opus, it's just not big enough for a growing program, and certainly not enough for a grossly inefficient assembler.

I had to move the text bars further apart to allow more of the weapons stations to be visible.

In order to control the time taken for units to be built, the game notes how long you've been flying the ship. Pausing *will* stop the clock, so it's no good leaving it paused overnight to get the extra weapons built! I'm just wondering what units of time I should use – days I suppose. I'd rather use something more mystical, like the Dalek's 'Rels' – they use them to measure everything: time, distance, energy, mass, the lot. It must make Dalek Physics lessons much shorter.

I'd just like to add my two penn'orth to the 'which 16-bit machine should I buy to play games on?' argument. Let's get some facts sorted out.

1. There are as many arcade games out for the Amiga as for the ST, mainly due to the higher numbers of Amigas in the US. At the moment you just have to search harder to find the Amiga software.
2. The Amiga hardware was designed primarily by the designer of the Atari 8-bit hardware (Jay Miner, a very clever guy), and is aimed at doing all the things that games need to do, smooth scrolling, manipulating large graphic images quickly and producing high quality sounds.
3. The Atari ST contains just enough hardware to make it graphically superior to most 8-bits. It has a large colour palette, but cannot smooth scroll using hardware. The only smooth scrolling possible will thus be limited in colour, vertical only, on a small area or very s-l-o-w. Sonically it has a very old chip indeed, as used in the Amstrad CPCs and Spectrum 128s, not as powerful even as old SID.
4. Despite what Commodore *still* maintain, the Amiga chips were designed with games in mind and will be used as such. How much business software uses four voice stereo sound? Or smooth scrolling?

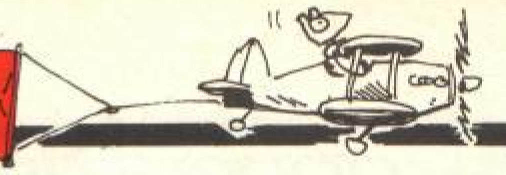
There will be some great games appearing on both machines, some already have, but anything the ST can do, the Amiga can do equally well, usually better. The reverse will never be true, provided programming standards are similar. In conclusion I would say that the Amiga to the ST is like the C64 to the Spectrum.

Wednesday 13th May

Added one or two new graphics to the set of on-ship systems which look quite nice. It's difficult to come up with a whole set of graphics which all look different but have to blend in with the same surroundings, but I'm sure you don't want to know about that! I've started to organise the 'eco-system' within the game for the meanies. Each level will be played over two alternating phases with the ship able to commute between the two via the docking bay. I want to create different atomic-style structures of a central charged impenetrable nucleus surrounded by charged particles that have to be recharged by a charge-carrier that shuttles between them and the nucleus (phew). Each particle decays with time and must be revisited periodically. The main ship gun, nicknamed the toothpaste tube, can suck out and store this charge. This may cause other things to occur, and you may not be the only one trying to steal the charge!

Richard Groome paid us a visit and he may be able to help us with a little surprise on the music front, we'll have to do some feasibility studies, but we're hopeful. Can't say any more about that yet, very hush-hush, top secret and all that.

To Be Continued . . .



ZZAP! WINNERS! ...RESULTS·

WHO'S GOTTA LOTTA BOTTLE?

Mastertronic's official milk race competition gave Julian a chance to show off his knowledge of all things pedalled. We asked five questions with a cycling theme, and pulled the winning entry from Glenys' oversized saddlebag. First prize of a Dawes Spectra Racing Bike, a day out at the Milk Race and a copy of any cyclists unique official jersey goes to **Jon Furley**, of Frampton-On-Sea, Gloucester. And fifty runners-up receive a copy of the game . . .

Simon Witchard, Nr Bristol, BS17 5QG; Martin Warnett, South Wales, CF1 9HQ; Anthony Jones, Gwent, NP6 3AZ; John Jackson, Manchester, M27 1UN; Ian Bush, Cambridge, CB5 8PA; J Managhan, Dyfed, SA65 9QA; Chris Ryan, Suffolk, IP9 2XA; Mr A Francart, St. Martins, Guernsey; Mr S Gurney, London, N21 2EH; Robert Harding, London, E10 5AZ; David Janes, Cheshire, SK11 8ES; R D Carson, Staffs, WS11 2JY; Stephen Blow, South Humberside, DN35 0NH; Michael D'Netto, Surrey, TW9 4DE; Vinson Pike, Wilts, SN2 2LS; Chris Burchett, Oxon, OX14 2QS; Jamie Fellingham, Middlesex, HA4 9RF; Stephen Conway, Middlesex, UB4 9DQ; Stuart Price, Scotland, KY8 5BX; Vincent Bird, Herts, AL1 5SE; Chris Counsell, Hampshire, SO3 2SD; Oliver May, Bucks, HP15 6PX; Mathew Balk, Surrey, KT20 5JG; Bryan White, 14 George Street, Ashington; Nicholas Williams, West Yorkshire, WF2 0RN; A M Pollard, West Yorkshire, HX5 9DU; Barry Machin, Cheshire, WA5 2LE; Simon Martin, Southampton, SO1 8HD; Vincent Bird, Herts, AL1 5SE; Mark Drury, Manchester, M19 2AL; Martin Bush, Cambridge, CB4 2EJ; Stephen Wood, West Sussex, RH10 4YX; Mr E C Delaforce, Cornwall, EX23 9NN; Adam Pierce, East Sussex, BN25 3DB; Andrew Rischert, Derby, DE2 8LN; A Clark, Cleveland, TS19 7HF; M W Foggin, Cleveland, TS19 0UX; Jim Massie, Lancs, L39 1QA; Steven Talbot, Dorset, BH20 4RB; Robert Pettet, Orpington, Kent; G Block, Middlesex, UB5 4BS; Gavin Bland, Derbyshire, S41 0JJ; Thomas Jagiello, Stafford, ST17 4EZ; Richard Walker, West Midlands, DY3 3SB; Karim Bouali, London, SW17 8LD; Robert Howard, Derby, DE3 7FD; Adrian Mellor, Stoke-On-Trent, ST8 7RR; Nick Colburt, Leicestershire, LE9 6HY; Colin Hall, Harrogate, North Yorkshire; Richard Middlemiss, Sheffield, S18 6UQ

COVER GIRL . . .

Once again you showed your obvious enthusiasm to appear on the cover of your favourite Commodore magazine, as entries flowed through the letterbox of ZZAP! towers at an unprecedented rate. **Karen Gordon** of Worcester won the team over with her feminine charms (complaints of sexism and bias are probably fully justified) and will hopefully be appearing on the cover of our next issue.

And five runners each receive the complete ZZAP! wardrobe

Neil Richards, Surrey, CR3 1JP; Andrew Goodman, Avon, BS23 2SS; Tim Hart, Hereford, HR1 2RE; Richard Gibbs, Cheshire, WA14 4QH; David Cowey, North Shields, NE29 0HJ

FOOTBALL FORTUNES

Ten hidden words were all that stood between ten lucky winners and ten copies of CDS's footballing board game (and a football for kicks). The prospective team managers are . . .

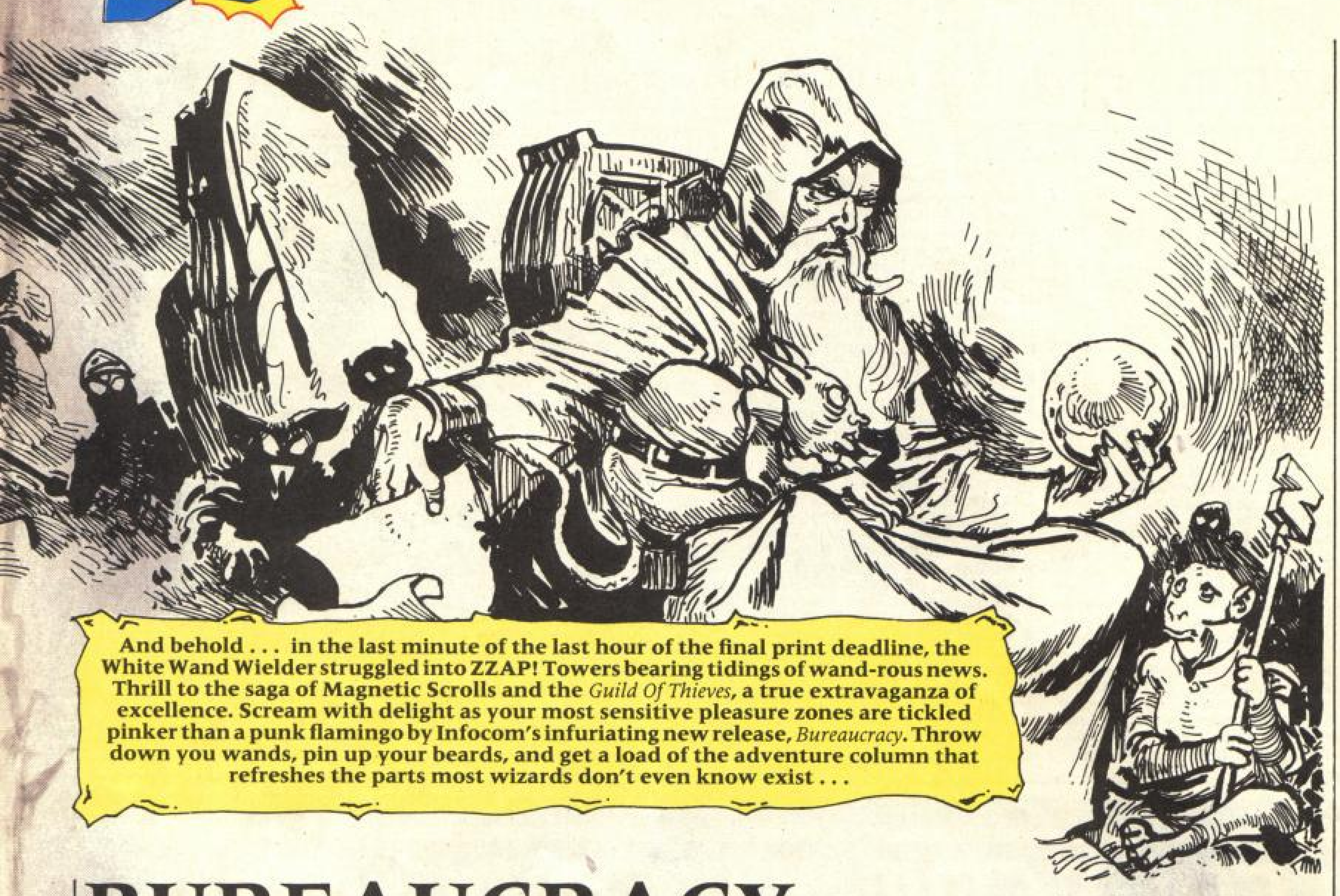
G D Benford, Merseyside, L37 1PZ; M Shields, Hants, BH24 1RA; Gary M Thackray, Nottingham, NG3 1AL; Rachel Brown, North Humberside, HU15 2XH; Gary Mills, County Durham, DL14 9TB; W Hill, Somerset, TA2 7AJ; Darren Cooke, South Yorkshire, S64 8QA; Stephen Parker, Leicester, LE2 5UR; Spencer Binks, Doncaster, DN4 9LG; Steven Davis, London, N20 8NL



CHART VOTING DRAW WINNERS

WINNER (£40 worth of software plus ZZAP! T-Shirt): **Paul Westgate**, Norwich NR4 6LE

RUNNERS UP (ZZAP! T-Shirt and Cap): **Terry O'Hara**, Kirkintilloch G66 3HA; **Andrew Ward**, Stalybridge SK15 1UU; **Richard Walker**, Dudley DY3 3SB; **Christopher Martin**, Sheffield S31 7BX



And behold . . . in the last minute of the last hour of the final print deadline, the White Wand Wielder struggled into ZZAP! Towers bearing tidings of wand-rous news. Thrill to the saga of Magnetic Scrolls and the *Guild Of Thieves*, a true extravaganza of excellence. Scream with delight as your most sensitive pleasure zones are tickled pinker than a punk flamingo by Infocom's infuriating new release, *Bureaucracy*. Throw down you wands, pin up your beards, and get a load of the adventure column that refreshes the parts most wizards don't even know exist . . .

BUREAUCRACY

Infocom/Activision, £34.00 disk only

NB: COMMODORE 128 ONLY!

Douglas Adams did it with *Hitchhikers*. The Wiz isn't exactly sure *what* he did, but the result was one of Infocom's best selling games. Now he's done it again with *Bureaucracy*. Yup, there's no doubt about it, this game is as tricky as *Zork*, as devious as *HHGTTG*, and as frustrating as getting an engaged tone from Directory Enquiries for the 800th time in succession . . . But it's an exquisite torture, mein Wizardlings, and I must advise all of you with the necessary hard cash (and suitable machinery) to stump up and add it to your collection.

The story goes as follows. You have changed your job and in doing so changed your address. Your new employers, Happitec, are to send you on an all expenses paid trip to Paris and your bank have issued you with a little change of address form, which you have filled in and returned to them. Now all you have to do is sit back and wait for the postman to deliver a fat cheque from your employer so that you can collect some cash, your air-ticket, and make your way to Gay Paree.

Unfortunately, there is some trouble with the mail. Apparently the bank's computer system has had a spot of bother with your change of address form and sent all your stuff to your old address. To cut a long story short, that means no cash from your local branch of the Fiduciary Trust. Combine that with a local postman who has bravely delivered all the mail in your street to the wrong addresses, and you begin to have a problem.

By the time you've battled it out with the bank, an old woman with an elephant gun, a psychotic parrot, a starving llama, and a paranoid freak who lives in a camouflaged house and entertains visitors with an arsenal of death-dealing hardware, you've not only got a problem, you've got the beginnings of severe mental disturbance. This is definitely men in white coats material – and it's likely to be you they're coming for.

The game comes in the usual high-standard Infocom package, complete with a flyer for the magazine Popular Paranoia, and a form to fill in for a new Beezer credit card in triplicate. The form itself is hilarious – each page of the three part set has different text printed on it, so while you're filling in the top copy agreeing to cover all charges due on the card, you're also filling in the bottom copy, which says 'Beezer may sign any documents on my behalf and I agree to be liable for anything', as well as other more obscure concealed declarations ('I like sheep', to name but one).

Publicity agents have it that Douglas Adams endured a real-life experience related to change of address difficulties (haven't we all) and that these inspired the game. Bureaucracy, whether it be in the bank (where you get shunted from one cashier to the next) or in the taxi (you have credit cards – they only take cash), is held up for ridicule and damnation through-



out the game. The program itself begins by asking you to fill in an on-screen software licence form, which of course is not quite as efficient and straightforward as it looks . . .

But in the final analysis it's the little bits of quirky humour that make the game and could only have come from the warped mind of one such as Mr Adams. For example, the parrot lacks a left wing. That means it's a right wing parrot, liable to spout fascist propaganda at the slightest provocation. Of course, the next time you play it may only have a left wing . . .

Then there's the unspeakable 'nerd' who keeps coming up to you trying to sell you the most horrendously useless computer peripherals. Ignore him, and his final words are 'Hey! Can I go out with your sister?!' – Ugh . . .

A new prompt-response system enables you to have more concise conversations with characters. Apart from the usual Infocom SAY TO and CHARACTER, MESSAGE forms of communication, you'll also find yourself interrogated by some of the characters. The system then throws up a double prompt, which means you have to give a particular answer, as in:

'Do you want to make a withdrawal'
>Yes
The teller hands you a withdrawal slip.

This is used to great effect in some instances, particularly in the fast-food restaurant, where you are prompted for endless choices of diet coke, distilled water, and other not so goodies. It's also used in a bizarre and highly amusing set of questions and answers with the local paranoid, who decides your future by asking you about 'Them.' You may not know it, but 'They' update their files on you by going through your garbage – that's when they're not dying like the rest of us from hideous killer diseases spread by . . . yogurt. Always supposing that you've escaped the dreaded killer bees which, of course, are being unleashed on America by vindictive Mexicans.

My only criticism of this game is that it isn't quite as verbose on the text front as other Infocom games. The humour, however, makes up for the slight lack of scene-setting, and the rest of the gameplay is as good as ever.

Bureaucracy is a very enjoyable game. Adams and Infocom obviously share a certain vein of highly infectious humour – I guess they must eat yogurt together. As it is, if you save up your pennies and blow them on this little number I doubt very much if you'll be disappointed.

Atmosphere	92%
Interaction	93%
Lasting Interest	92%
Value	85%
Overall	**90%**

THE BIG SLEAZE



Piranha, £9.95 cass

The Wiz gave this a brief preview last month. Now the finished version has popped onto his desk and has revealed its secrets.

As with previous Fergus McNeill games (*The Boggit*, *Bored Of The Rings* and so on) this is a three-part/load Quillustrated game with a sharp sense of parody. As Private Eye Spillade your job is to solve a number of crimes or mysteries, banking your clients cheques as you attempt to avoid both bankruptcy and the numerous threats of death and destruction that you encounter.

The graphics are excellent (although there aren't an enormous number of them), and combined with the copious and well-written text they give the game a very attractive feel.



There are a couple of things about this game that left the Wiz slightly less impressed than he might have been. Mr McNeill writes some pretty good prose when he relies on taking the mickey out of the American detective story. However, when he drops in one of his many risque jokes (about private 'dicks', or shoving dynamite up a pig's backside) things seem to start going downhill a bit.

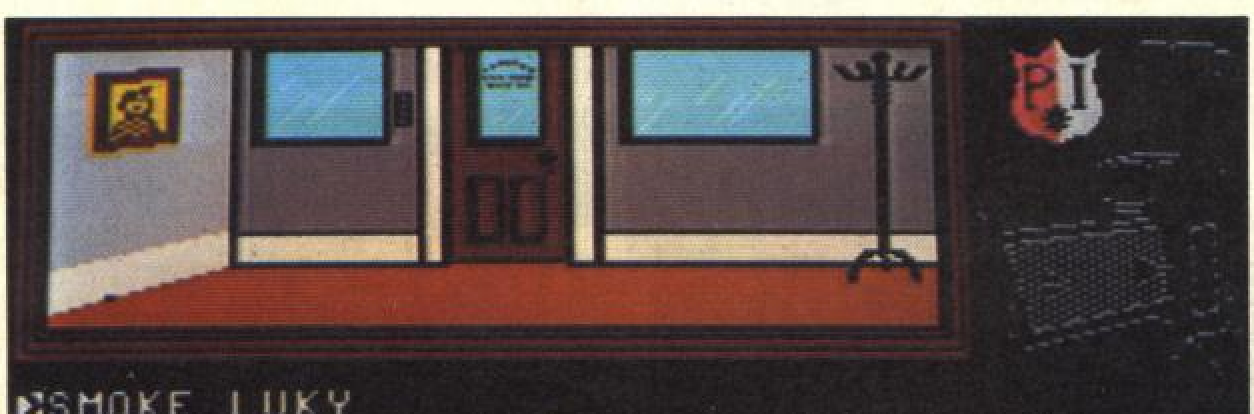
Now, don't think I'm being prudish (perhaps I am), because we're not talking about anything particularly rude. It's just that it seems so easy to make people laugh by mentioning private dicks, or whatever. Okay, 'so what's wrong with that', I hear you cry – if people laugh, then it must be funny. Perhaps it is – but only for the first time you read it, whereas the pleasure the player gets from a well-written, witty take-off of Mickey Spillane tough-guy prose is more enduring. Luckily there's a lot of the latter, but I do wish there was less of the former.

The other thing that annoyed me was the way the vocabulary had been set up. I suspect that there was a memory problem or something, because many of the essential actions in the game do not have enough synonyms. For example, when your find your car in the street, you might quite naturally enter ENTER CAR. Unfortunately, 'You can't'. That's a little misleading, since of course you can – but only by typing GET INTO CAR.

Similarly, when you blow up the pig with the dynamite, you might type LIGHT DYNAMITE, but again you can't – you must LIGHT FUSE. The latter case seems even more unfair, because a close examination of the dynamite doesn't reveal a fuse to light.

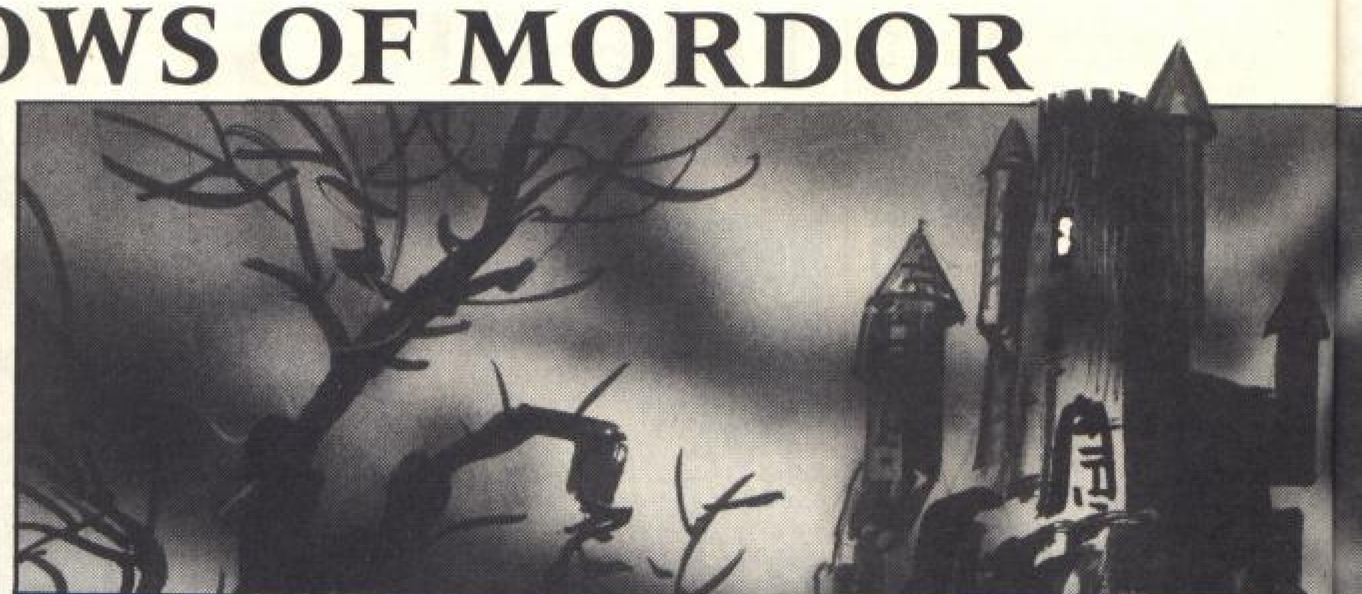
All this is really as much of a reflection on the system that Fergus McNeill uses to write his games. They're good games and give a reasonable return for your investment, but perhaps it's time Fergus chose another system.

Atmosphere	75%
Interaction	60%
Lasting Interest	68%
Value	70%
Overall	**70%**



SHADOWS OF MORDOR

Melbourne House, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk



Shadows Of Mordor was one of the new titles previewed last month by Ol' Whitey. When I had the pre-production demo in my hands, I felt that there was hope yet for Melbourne House. However, one or two things have happened to give me cause for doubt. Is it really worth following on from *Lord Of The Rings*, for £9.95?

Well, on the 64 the game is still very slow. It's not just that the program itself is often updating the other characters, it also gives itself so much to do. Do we really want to know everything that Sam is carrying as we move about the map. That, surely, is what the INVENTORY command is for. Why bother to print out such long inventories (and there's a lot to carry in this game) unless we ask for them.

Similarly, the parser seems to make very heavy weather of even the simplest inputs. For example, on the east bank of the river, EXAMINE BANK gets you FRODO DOESN'T SEE ANY BANK TO EXAMINE – and this blindness is often repeated. In fact, I could give you a short but amusing list of inputs and responses – here we go, playing Frodo:

>MURDER FRODO
(no response – not even an error message)
>ATTACK FRODO
Frodo attacks Frodo. Frodo has given Frodo a vicious scratch.
>OUT
Frodo doesn't see anything to lever over the cliff (!!)
>SWIM
Frodo doesn't see anything to drown in

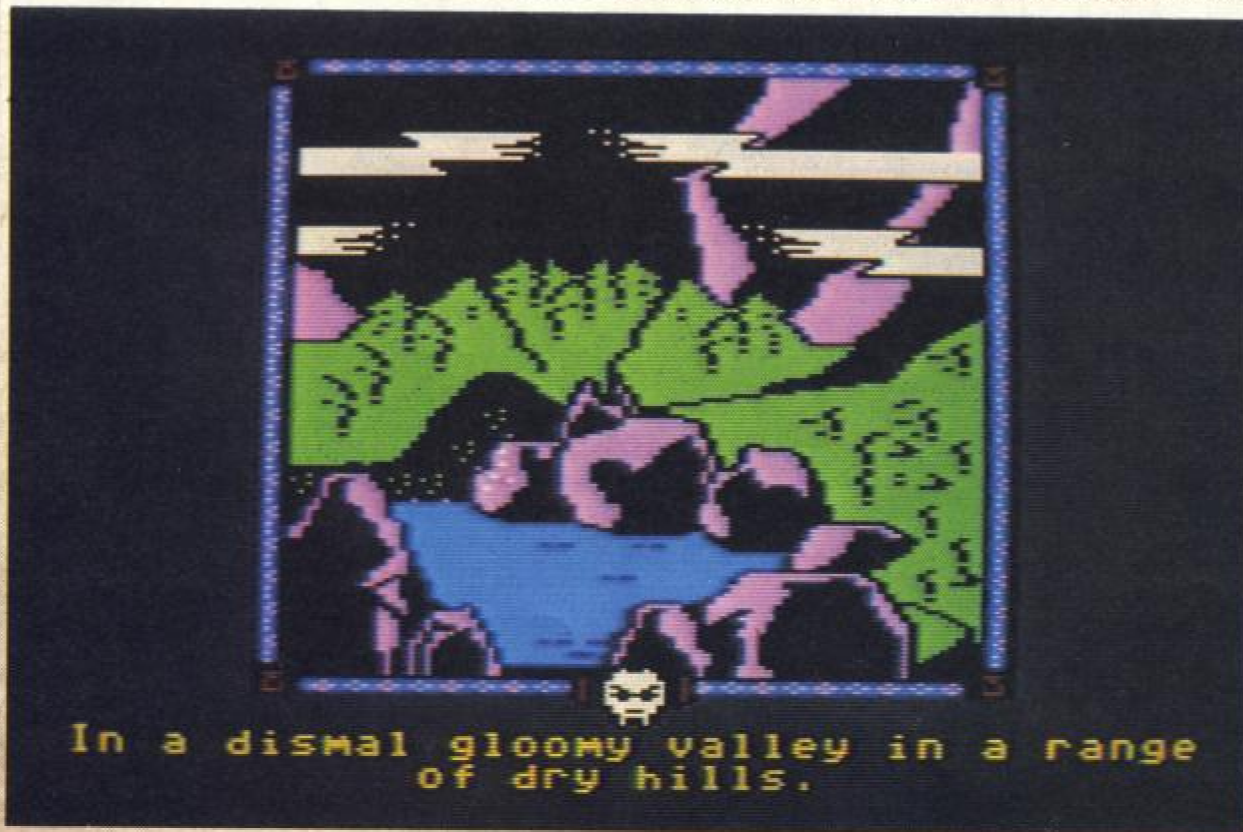


. . . more's the pity, say I. At any rate, we obviously have a viciously masochistic Frodo who is obsessed with cliffs.

As for the graphics – well, they're a great disappointment. On my version they loaded from disk, but didn't seem to be any the better for that. Certainly not a patch on *The Big Sleaze*.

Really the only good news is that the unlike *LOR* the game didn't crash while I was playing it and that the puzzles are okay – I quite enjoyed solving them and they do offer some variety. However I thought that one or two were just a little obscure – especially the one near the beginning of the game where you have to make Smeagol promise to be good. I don't see many people getting that one for a while (unless they read this). I also can't see many people putting this game on the front of their shelves – the rear for reference, perhaps, but it doesn't seem destined to share the fame (either for good or ill) of its predecessors.

Atmosphere	50%
Interaction	58%
Lasting Interest	68%
Value	55%
Overall	**55%**



ADVENTURE PREVIEW!
GUILD OF THIEVES

Rainbird/Magnetic Scrolls

This long awaited sequel to *The Pawn* will hopefully be on the shelves as you read this. The Wiz sneaked out to visit Magnetic Scrolls and has returned with this report . . .

Anita Sinclair, Ken Gordon, and newcomer Hugh Steers work from a small office near London Bridge. At the moment, they're best known for *The Pawn* – now a great success on a number of different formats as a graphic adventure, though originally a text-only game for the QL. The company have their own adventure system that runs on a VAX, and enables them to cross-assemble and produce code to run on no less than 11 formats.

It's actually *The Pawn*'s graphics which first strike people, and the same is undoubtedly true of *Guild Of Thieves*. As you can see from the accompanying screen-shots, the piccies are pretty stunning – Anita reckons that 'the style of graphics we have are works of art in their own right' and it's hard to disagree. But just how important are they?

'The thing that worries me about graphics', reflects Anita, 'is that a lot of people won't buy games without them. But they're not at all important, although you could argue that – for example – the Lewis Carroll books (Alice in Wonderland) wouldn't have been the same without the illustrations.'

As it is, the company will be bringing out 'a couple of text-only games in the next two years.' That should be interesting, because the other main strength of Magnetic Scrolls' system is its parser. There aren't many games where, carrying a set of keys and two bottles (red bottle and champagne bottle) you could carry out the following:

>open bottles, empty them
The champagne bottle is now open.
The red bottle is now open.
The wine seeps away.
The red bottle is now empty.
The champagne seeps away.
The champagne bottle is now empty.
>put key in bottle
Which one, the red bottle or the champagne bottle?
>red
Which one, the golden key, the ebony key, or the ivory key?
>golden
The golden key is now inside the red bottle.
>put key in bottle in champagne bottle
The golden key is now in the champagne bottle.

Now THAT is pretty nifty – note how in the last command the parser is accepting an adjectival (or is it prepositional) phrase to define an object (the 'in the bottle' key). Note how the Wiz is a master of grammatical nomenclature . . .

Not only is the parser pretty hot (and they're working on a new one – which should really be a corker), but the game design in both *The Pawn* and *Guild* is often excellent. Here's a neat little passage from Guild where you chat to a Mynah Bird . . .

>mynah, hello
The mynah bird squawks loudly.
>again
The mynah bird squawks loudly.
>again
The mynah bird squawks loudly, 'hello'.

Yes, you guessed it – you can train it to speak.

Guild Of Thieves itself is a 100-location, 600-item, 17-treasure game in which you must qualify for membership of the elite Guild by pulling off a series of jobs and deposit your ill-gotten gains in the night safes of the Bank of Kerovnia. 'One of the things people objected to about *The Pawn*, was our weirdness' says Anita. 'We've taken a lot of our weirdness out of the *Guild Of Thieves*. It's leap-years ahead of *The Pawn* – we sent a copy to Infocom and it came out at Number Six in their all-time list of favourite games.'

That's no mean praise from a competitor of whom Magnetic Scrolls are justly proud to be judged alongside. Anita is obviously proud of their links with the US company (they send each other beta-versions of their games to test), and can't resist mentioning them on first-name terms with noticeable frequency – but that's only understandable. There can't be many other adventure software houses in the world who can claim to be in the same league.

There's no doubt that the 16-bit versions of *Guild* are superb pieces of software. What the 8-bit versions will be like remains to be seen – and doubtless you'll be in a position to judge by the time this issue comes out. One thing's for certain – the Wiz would be astonished if the pennies you squandered on *Guild* (complete with copy of What Burglar magazine, in sumptuous Rainbird packaging) didn't turn out to be one of the best adventure investments of the year.

The Wizard's Mailbox

MONEY GRABBING, UNORIGINAL, AND BORING . . .

''I think that the quality of tape-based games is steadily declining, with the exception of the product of one company – Level 9. This is undoubtedly the best software house in Britain (What about Magnetic Scrolls? – Wiz), *second in the world only to Infocom. In my view Infocom should do knocked down versions of their disk games on tape so that all of us tape owners can have a crack at them.*

''Since Rainbird have taken over Level 9's marketing, they have got better, offering such superb trilogies as Jewels Of Darkness, *and I think it's about time that other software companies did the same. In fact, the only criticism I have of Level 9 are the fact that you now have to pay £1.00 for a hint sheet, and that their games are a little too hard. It took me six months to crack the Eden Transport system in* Worm In Paradise!

''Software companies like St Brides and Delta 4 should stray away from The Quill *and develop their own system. I personally don't like the* GAC *as the games which are turned out seem so amateurish when you play them.*

''Everyone seems to be running out of ideas. What the adventure player wants is a game which is moderately difficult, funny (although still serious – I hate spoof games). Good graphics aren't necessary, nor is sound, but they are still appreciated. We want a good parser, a good vocabulary where the words aren't too difficult to discover. You should be able to enter long or short commands as you wish without any trouble and the messages should be informative, constructive and helpful. The game itself must be original and addictive, with a good, sturdy storyline.''

All that from **Jason Jennings**. Hmmmm . . . Well, I agree with you on many of the points you've raised, though not all of them, Jason. In many respects the standard of adventures *is* dropping with depressing rapidity, but there are a couple of points to make. One, it appears to be dropping faster than it is because the programming techniques used in arcade games have developed so extensively in the last three years, whereas the techniques in adventure programming have not. Two, the points we're making are mostly relevant to tape-based games only – once you start writing for disk, or looking at existing disk-based adventures, things look much more encouraging. Let's face it, the blame lies as much with hardware industry for perpetuating the absurd cassette loading system as it does with the software houses. Perhaps Alan Sugar and others will change all this . . .

WE'RE ONLY HUMAN . . .

''I recently received a letter asking for solutions to eight adventures. I don't mind people asking for one or two solutions, but eight! It would take me hours and hours to do that. I don't know how you feel about people taking us Clever Contacts for granted and expecting the services which they would get from an adventure club for free, but it annoys me greatly. Isn't it possible that you could print this somewhere that we are only human and can't be expected to do these things for free? After all, we are volunteers – we don't have to do it!''

I read this with interest – and then realised it was yet another letter from Jason Jennings. Once again, however, this prolific letter writer makes an interesting point. When you get in touch with members of the Clever Contacts Hall of Heroes, please give some consideration to your request beforehand. The real function of the Contacts is to give assistance to people who are stuck. So if you're playing a game, and simply can't make any progress, you can get in touch with someone for a clue and some advice. Asking for the complete solutions to eight games does strike me as being a little excessive! Not all Contacts have printers, for example, and having to write out eight solutions in long-hand is a daunting task, however much one may wish to help one's fellow adventurers.

HOW CAN I MAKE A MILLION?

When the Wiz wrote his piece about *Winter Wonderland* and *Apache Gold*, he mentioned some costs for producing games and marketing them. This seems to have fired the imagination of a large number of readers from around the world, who have all written in on the same theme – 'I've written a game, how can I sell it?'.

If there was an easy answer to this question, we'd all be making pots of money. In fact, making a success of selling your games is a full-time occupation – you need the skill and inspiration to create a quality program in the first place, you need luck to persuade a software company to back it, or if you're unlucky money of your own to risk in launching the product yourself.

The brutal answer is that if ▶

you're asking how to go about things, then you're probably the sort of person who shouldn't bother! However, every now and then someone produces a really excellent game that lies in the cupboard and goes nowhere. So here are some brief tips . . .

1. Practice your aggressive sales technique by phoning up software houses and demanding that they look at your product.
2. Get feedback and assistance from other adventurers – one of the best ways of doing this is by joining a club. Probably the most suitable organisation for this sort of thing is **Adventure Contact**, a club for adventure writers run by **Pat Winstanley** at **13 Hollington Way, Wigan WN3 6LS**. There's a monthly magazine with lots of help on this tricky subject.
3. Always present your product for evaluation in as smart a manner as possible – type the instructions, put proper labels on the cassette/disk, and provide a solution. Always attempt to present a copy for evaluation in person, so that you can add your personal sales touch to the presentation.
4. Don't bother to do anything unless you're product is original, flawless in punctuation and spelling, bug-free, and better (in yours and other people's opinion) than at least 50% of the games currently in the shops.

Wizard Tips!

This month's tips are brought to you by the following Immortal Ones . . .

Robert Lawford, **Andrew Blackman**, **Damon Smith**, **Russell Wallace**, and **Brett Buckley**.

Valkyrie 17
Move straw to find fuel
Spray foam on camera
Stop laser beams with mirror

Very Big Cave Adventure
For amusing responses, type:

EXAM TRIXIE
KISS TRIXIE
EXAM CAR (when you are by the car)
EXAM TOODLOO (when you can see TOODLOO)

The Golden Baton
Rub ring for a key
Hold a mirror before going in the locked room

The Boggit
Escape from goblin's dungeon – the ring is SE N SE E SE E
To kill dragon, shoot him in the tail

Spiderman
Shoot web at bio-gem

Zzzzzz . . .
You must lift bucket before getting it

Castle Of Terror
The tankard of ale may be a refreshing change, but it may quench the parts other beers cannot reach – then freedom!

Sherlock
You must enter closet, take one look, don't be a slitty-eyed fool, and take it to the door of a smuggling den

Asylum
Be careful when entering the surgeons den – the operating theatre holds more secrets than meets the eye and nose

The Pawn
Cut wallpaper with a garden implement
Knock on the doors several times
Pay the porter with a bottle of whiskey
Ask the devil about life
When you kill Kronos, remember that 'aerosoul' is NOT a mis-spelling

Leather Goddesses Of Phobos
The answer to the Sultan's riddle is itself
The coded message is decoded by shifting each letter along a certain number of places in the alphabet – it's also written backwards

Lord Of The Rings
The shirt of mail from the troll's cave will only fit Pippin
Before you choose to avoid Moria, make sure you have the matches and firewood
At the small cave, send companions E E SE SE to stop them being killed by the avalanche. Finally, go after them, but don't bother to go west from Dimrill Dale – unless you want to have fun with Gandalf in Moria!

Clever Contacts

Once again the White Wizard presents his unique guide to the great adventure brains of the world. Here in this column you will find the names and addresses of those most qualified to assist you in times of trouble. And who knows – you might even make a new friend as well.

Adventureland, Adenture Quest, Arrow of Death I & II, Ballyhoo, Blade of Blackpoole, Borrowed Time, Buckaroo Banzai, Castle of Terror, Circus, Colditz, Crystals of Carus, Cutthroats, Dallas Quest, Dungeon Adventure, Emerald Isle, Empire of Karn, Enchanter, Erik the Viking, Escape from Pulsar 7, Espionage Island, Eye of Bain, Feasibility Experiment, Forest at the Worlds End, Ghost Town, Golden Voyage, Gremlins, Gruds in Space, Hampstead, Heroes of Karn, Infidel, Invincible Island, Kayleth, Kentilla, Leather Goddesses, Lords of Time, Lucifers Realm, Magicians Ball, Magic Stone, Mask of the Sun, Mindshadow, Mission Asteroid, Moonmist, Mordon's Quest, Mystery Funhouse, Mystery of Munroe Manor, Ninja, Perseus and Andromeda, Pharaohs Tomb, Pirate Adventure, Planetfall, Pyramid of Doom, Rebel Planet, Red Moon, Return to Eden, Ring of Power, Robin of Sherwood, Savage Island I, Secret Mission, Ship of Doom, Sorceror, Sorceror of Claymorgue Castle, Souls of Darkon, Spellbreaker, Spiderman, Strange Odyssey, Tass Times, Ten Little Indians, The Count, Golden Baton, Hobbit, The Institute, Jewels of Babylon, The Journey, Never Ending Story, Pawn, Time Machine, Wizard and Princess, Quest of Merravid, Tower of Despair, Tracer Sanction, Twin Kingdom Valley, Ultima I, III & IV, Urban Upstart, Ulysses and the Golden Fleece, Valkyrie 17, Velnors Lair, Voodoo Castle, Warlords, Waxworks, Winter Wonderland, Wishbringer, Witches Cauldron, Wizard Akyrz, Wrath of Magra, Zork I, II & III, Zzzzz . . .
Nick Carter, Southampton
Tel: (0703) 474777 2 pm to 10 pm ONLY

Heroes of Karn, Bored of the Rings, Gremlins, Voodoo Castle, Zim Zala Bim, Mugsys Revenge, Tropical Adventure, Dracula, Holy Grail, The Pawn, Return to Oz, Masters of the Universe, Robin of Sherwood, Fourth Protocol, Price of Magik
Christophe Brassart, 67 rue de l'Abbe Lemire, 59200 TOURCOING, France

Sherlock, Gremlins, Hulk, Spiderman, Fourth Protocol, Dallas Quest, Terrormolinos, Hobbit, Castle of Terror Parlapas Aris, 18 Pyrsinella Str 453 32, Ioannina, Greece Pawn, Tass Times, Borrowed Time, Tracer Sanction, Mindshadow, Starcross, Wishbringer, Seastalker, Ballyhoo, Enchanter, Sorceror, Spellbreaker, Leather Goddesses, Hitchhikers, Hulk, Spiderman, Fantastic Four, Gremlins, Red Moon, Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle, Worm in Paradise, Dungeon Adventure, Colossal Adventure, Return to Eden, Ultima III, Ultima IV, Nine Princes in Amber, Pilgrim, Perseus and Andromeda
Guy Thomas, 17 Borstal Hill, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4NA
Tel: 0227 274846 10 am to 8 pm ONLY

Tower of Despair, Dracula, Adventureland, Zim Zala Bim, Castle of Terror, Time Tunnel, Eureka
John Paterson, 8 Bracadale Road, Baillieston, Glasgow G69
Tel: 041 771 7729

Morden's Quest, Spiderman, Hacker
Nigel 'Nemesis' Richardson
Tel: 01 360 8325

Pirate Adventure, Circus, Zzzz, Terrormolinos, Subsunk, The Sorceror of Claymorgue Castle, Quest of Merravid, The Hobbit
Danny Dinneen,
12 Bishopscourt Way, Wilton, Cork, Republic of Ireland

Red Moon, Emerald Isle, Worm in Paradise, Hulk, Hobbit, Upper Gumtree, Hacker, Grand Larceny, Merry Christmas from Melbourne House, Robin of Sherwood, Snowqueen, Kentilla, Gremlins, Eureka, Terrormolinos, Lords of Time, Pirate Adventure, Sherlock, Bored of the Rings
Jason Jennings, 102 Berkely Road, Shirley, Solihull, Birmingham, West Midlands B90 2HU

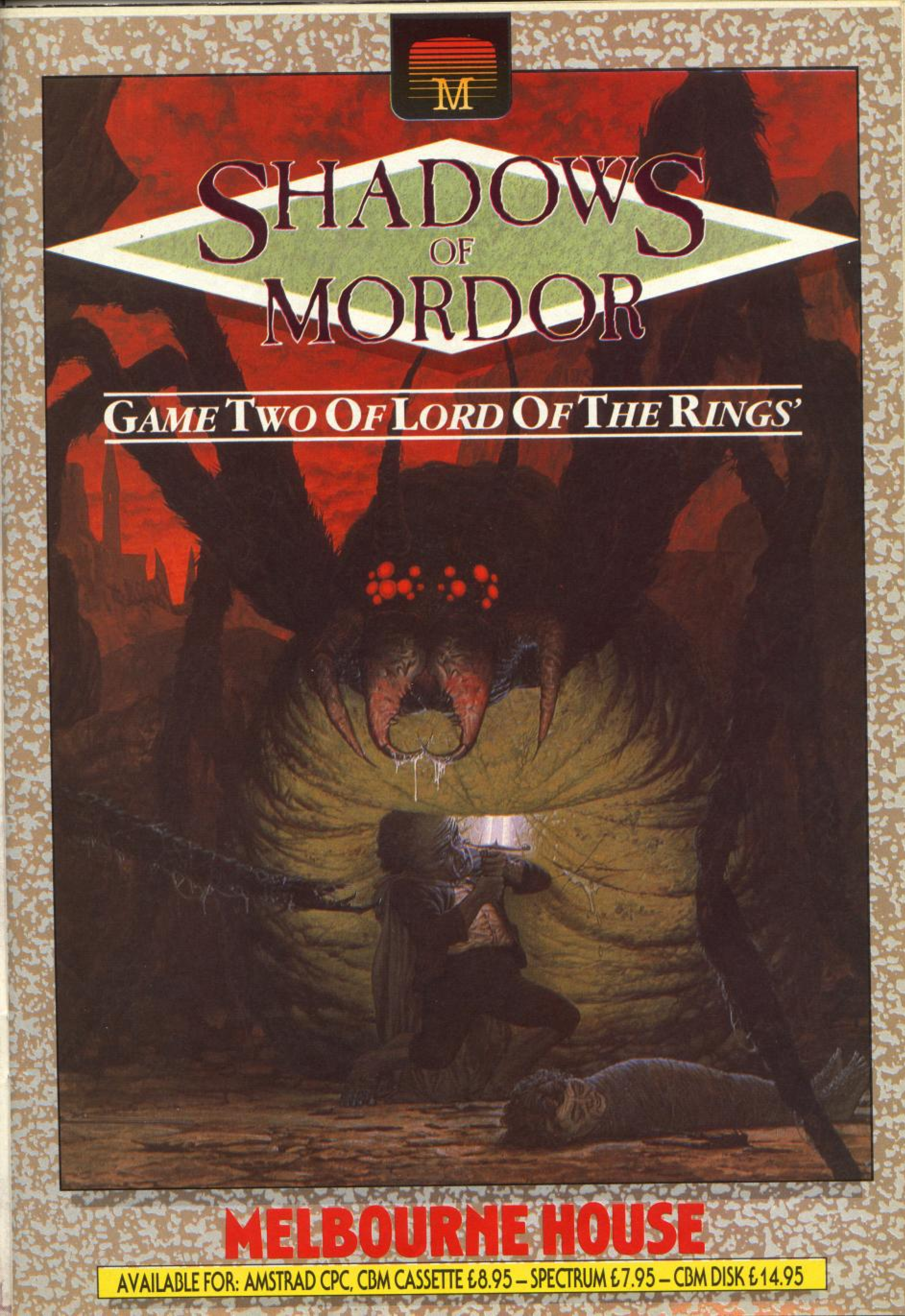
Ultima IV, Zork II, Suspended, Pirate Adventure, Voodoo Castle, Critical Mass, Wizard and the Princess, Mission Asteroid, Mummy's Curse, Mission Impossible, Robin of Sherwood, Masquerade
Derek Wong, 42 Ingram Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR4 8EB

Hampstead, Sherlock, Bored of the Rings, Boggit, Fantastic Four, Lord of the Rings, Terrormolinos, Castle of Terror, Mordens Quest, Zzzzz . . . , Heroes of Karn, Twin Kingdom Valley
David Sutherland, 54 Wendover Road, Eltham, London SE9 6PB or 01 319 3395 after 6pm

Zork I, II, III, Adventureland, Dangermouse in BFC, Earthbound, The Helm, Marie Celeste, Temple of Terror, Valkyrie 17, Temple of Vran, Mask of the Sun, Lords of Time, Dallas Quest, Infidel, Mystery Munroe Manor, Gremlins, Supergran, Planetfall, Ulysses, Blade of Blackpoole, Seastalker, HitchHikers, Ultima III, Search for King Solomons Mines, Skull Island, Murder on the Waterfront, Suspended, Cutthroats, Sorcerer, Enchanter, Ninja, Stranded, Hulk, Mindshadow, Lord of the Rings, Starcross, Sub-Sunk, Worm in Paradise, Hampstead, Classic Adventure, Colossal Cave, Terrormolinos, Robin of Sherwood, Sherlock, Claymorgue Castle, Emerald Isle, Wizard of Akyrz, Return to Eden, Red Moon, Never-ending Story, Escape From Pulsar 7, Perseus and Andromeda, Golden Baton, Bored of the Rings, Empire of Karn, Ket 3, Feasibility Experiment, Lucifers Realm, Pilgrim, Secret Mission, Treasure Island, Wishbringer, Circus, Arrow of Death 1 & 2, Ten Little Indians, Ring of Power, Quest for Holy Grail, Kentilla . . . (More next issue!)
Margot Stuckey, 14 Marampo St, Marayong, NSW 2148, Australia

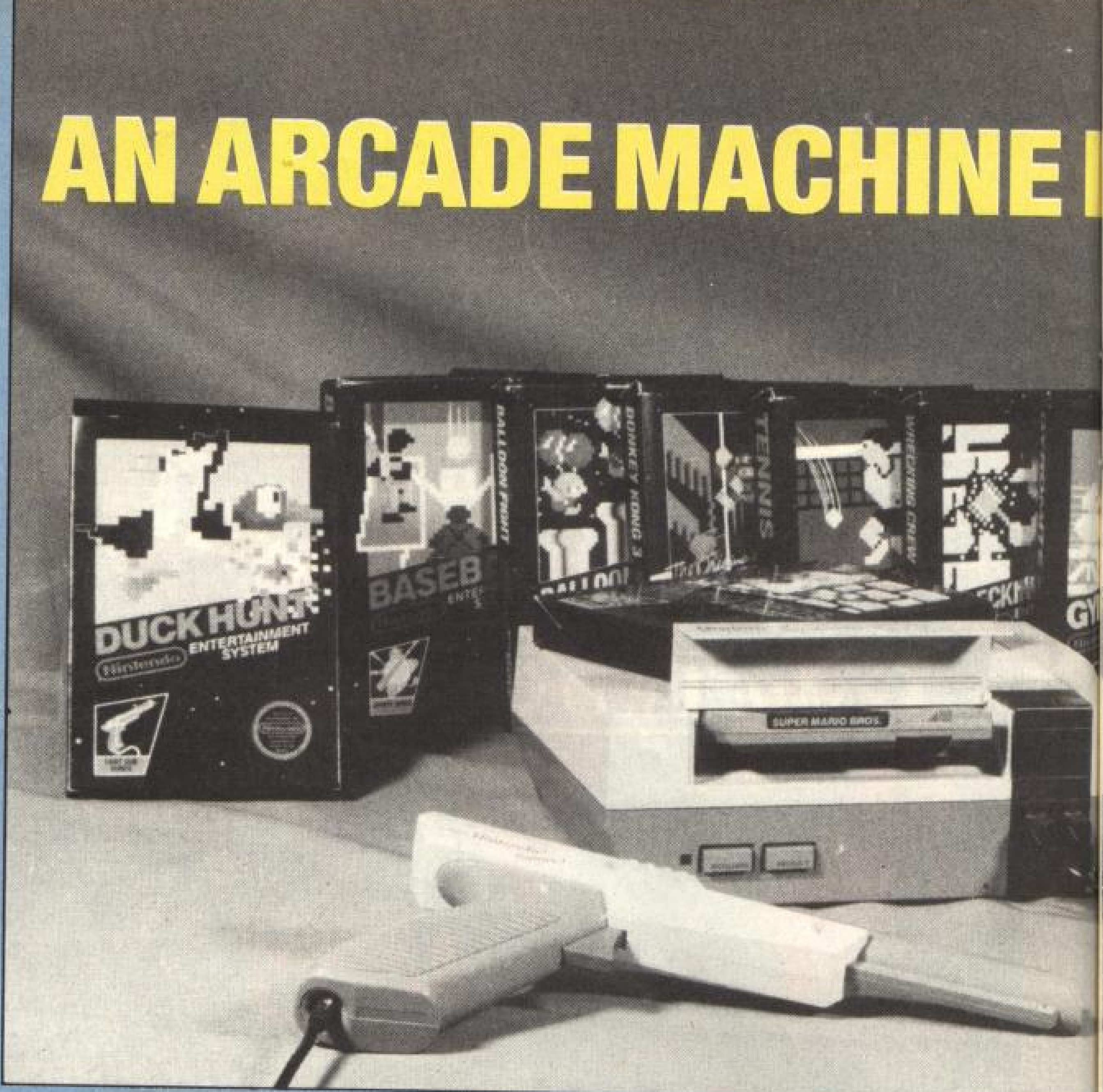
Voodoo Castle, Heroes of Karn, Pirate Adventure, Ten Little Indians, Hobbit, Lost City, Gremlins, Wizard of Akyrz, Quest for the Holy Grail, Zim Sala bim, Island Adventure, Castle Dracula
Paul Flanagan, 6 Corry, Belleek, Co Fermanagh, N Ireland
Tel: 036565 594

Dungeon Adventure, Lord of the Rings, Quest for the Holy Grail, Hampstead, Lords of Time, Inca Curse, Espionage Island, Planet of Death
David Lemon, 14 Norton Place, Dunfermline, FIfe KY11 4RH
Tel: 0383 728353 after 6pm Mon-Fri



M
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AN ARCADE MACHINE I



IT'S NO LARGER than a lunch box, weighs less than a Commodore power supply and looks about as powerful. And yet the Nintendo features 52 colours, 256 by 240 pixel resolution and 64 sprites, boasts many arcade perfect conversions and is rumoured to have sold about ten million units in Japan alone.

By the time you read this, Mattel will have launched the Nintendo games console in two guises – the basic and deluxe packages. For £130 you can buy a Nintendo console complete with a near arcade-perfect version of the immensely popular *Super Mario Brothers* – which has sold almost six million copies to date. The two controllers which are also supplied are basically enhanced versions of the Joycard, incorporating a durable, responsive rocker switch mechanism, with two fire and two select buttons – one of which is a pause. It doesn't take long to get used to this system, although the rocker switches do prove a little awkward at first.

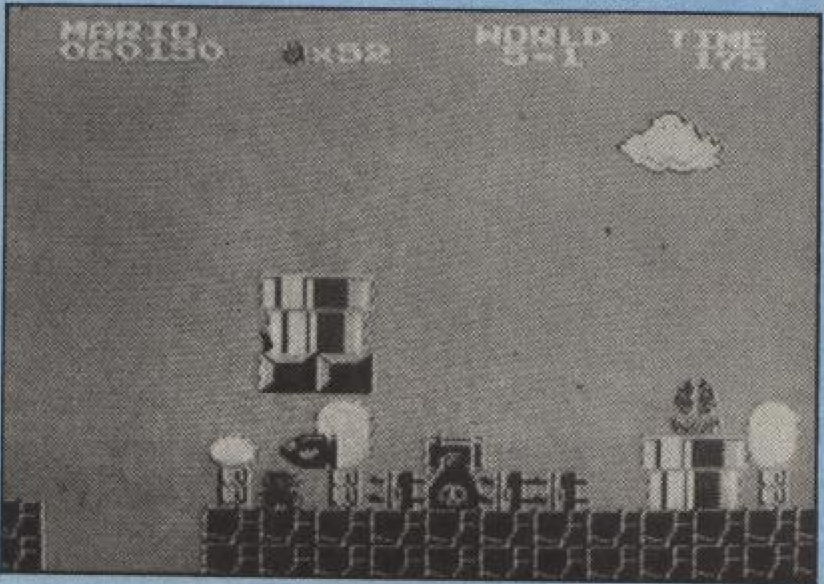
All games come in the form of ROM cartridges – flat, grey pieces of plastic which slot into the machine in the same way as tapes were inserted in early front-loading video recorders. Loading is instantaneous, and problems are few and far between. There are presently 27 available titles, with dozens to follow over the coming year. These include sports games, arcade conversions and more 'specialised' software, such as the educational range – at prices ranging between £20 and £35.

The deluxe package costs £199 and consists of the basic console, a light gun (Zapper) and robot (ROB – Robotic Operated Buddy), plus two games to start your collection – *Gyromite* and *Duck Hunt*.

The former is played in conjunction with ROB. One of the two controllers is slotted into a suitable receptacle, and using the second controller, ROB is made to pick up and drop special gyroscopes. ROB isn't connected to the console however – data is sent via the television. The screen flashes to indicate that data has been sent, and ROB responds accordingly with either a left, right, up or down movement. The gyroscopes have to be placed on one of two pivots, which in turn press the buttons on the controller and move animated pillars up and down on screen. You then take control of a professor and attempt to collect sticks of dynamite scattered around a scrolling play area, avoiding strange creatures in the process. *Gyromite* doesn't offer much long term challenge to the ardent arcade player, but it will undoubtedly appeal to younger games-players – especially because of ROB's involvement.

Although undoubtedly a strong games machine, what lies ahead for the Nintendo games console? Well, according to Mattel the current software only uses approximately 20% of the machine's capabilities, and that its strength lies in the fact that the console is expandable – the robot and light gun are just the beginning . . .

▼ SUPER MARIO BROS – start your own coin collection and rescue a beautiful princess in this immensely addictive arcade game



CRITICISMS

I'm very impressed with this machine. The graphics are colourful and the sound is almost arcade quality. Seeing as I use a Spectrum a lot, I probably appreciate these features more, but even bearing that in mind, I still enjoyed the experience. My personal favourite cartridge award has to go to Wild Gunman**; as others in the office will testify, I play it at every available moment, and I enjoy it as much now as when I first started.**

So it costs quite a bit when compared to a standard home computer – but even so, I reckon the Nintendo is one of the better things to have happened to the games world recently, and I pray that manufacturers will pick up on this opportunity, because the machine's success or failure depends entirely upon them. And in my opinion, any success it has will be well earned.
MICHAEL DUNN

There's no doubt that the Nintendo machine will cause a great deal of interest within the games market, but the high price may discourage all but the most dedicated of games players. At the moment the games are limited in style to old arcade concepts – I can't wait until they put a totally original game on it. The graphics are of a very high resolution considering the amount of colour used, with Duck Hunt **showing just how good the animation and realism can be. The only real disappointment is the sound, as the tunes are sharp and jolly but they seem more like little ditties than proper music. As with all new products I'm sure the quality of the software will improve – and with such a high starting standard the Nintendo will be well supported. The Nintendo machine is a box of the hottest potential in years. Nintendo have designed the hardware, it's up to the software houses now!**
PAUL SUMNER

On first sight, the Nintendo games console looks really neat, boasting brilliant graphics, intricate sound, and plenty of titles to sample. However, on a closer inspection it's not quite up to expectations. The tunes are similar to that of the pre-Hubbard Commodore offerings, which is a shame as the machine seems capable of producing some nice effects. The graphics are the machine's best aspect, being colourful, well animated, and smoothly scrolling. It would be nice to see some original software, and hopefully the software houses will be producing it quite soon. The hardware is of inconsistent quality, ranging from the dreadful keypad controllers to robust and easy to use cartridges. The gun is a mean weapon, a must for all shooting fanatics. If you're an arcade fanatic then this is the entertainment system for you – at an affordable price it should be a good seller at christmas. Now where's the Sega?
DAVID THOMPSON

N YOUR OWN HOME . . .



The main question to ask is why should a 64 owner buy a Nintendo? I would say that it's definitely a worthy investment if virtually flawless arcade conversions are what turn you on, as most Nintendo games are actually in the arcades in one form or another. Nintendo's Play Choice Ten arcade machine features ten Nintendo games, all of which are available – in almost identical form – for the home console. The difference being that the arcade machine costs around £2000, whereas the console and appropriate software costs a comparatively cheap £500.

However, at present it doesn't offer much more than the 64 on the game's front, as where the Nintendo boasts near-perfect conversions, the 64 has many of its own original and immensely playable games – like *The Sentinel*, *Paradroid*, *Wizball* and so on. So, at the end of the day it's all down to excellent software support – and not just from Nintendo. Although conversions are planned both to and from the Nintendo and 64.

GARY PENN

I'm very, very impressed! At first the Nintendo games don't look anything special, I suppose because one expects to see some sort of photographic mega-graphics. Instead, Nintendo have opted for colourful high quality cartoon style sprites which are beautifully animated and full of character.

Generally the games are simple, 'cute' arcade games that are easy to pick up and play, but they should keep you entertained for months. The fiendishly addictive and incredibly playable *Super Mario Brothers* is a fine example – arcade perfect (flawless actually), and I can truthfully say that it's the finest computer games I've ever played. The other thing is that they're all the type of game you always come back to – the initial novelty might wear off after a while, but weeks or months later you'll load them again, just to have another quick bash . . .

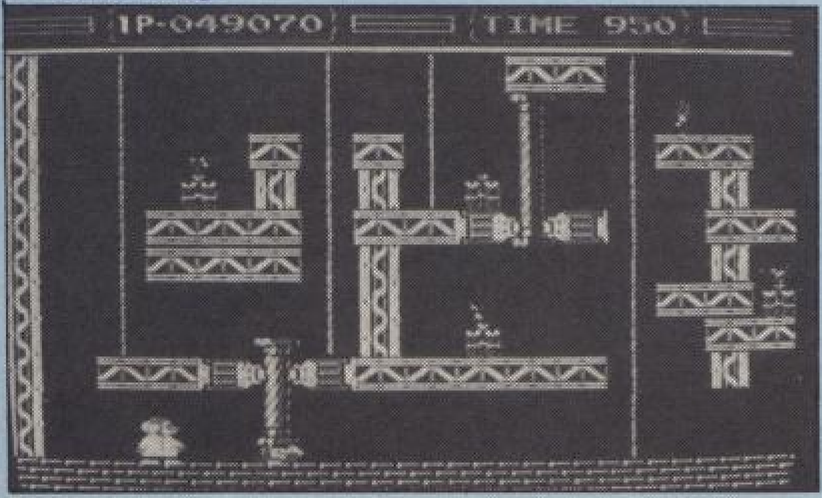
I liked the robot. It might be limited at the moment, but what should one expect? There's nothing like it at this price and it's fully expandable. *Stack Up* is nothing brilliant – but what sort of extra features are going to be available in the future? The games potential for this machine is also immense – *Ten Yard Fight*, *Star Force*, *Commando* are all goodies to look out for . . . I can't wait.

JULIAN RIGNALL

My first contact with 'computer games' came through an old Atari console which I encountered in about 1980, and this seems at first sight to be a progression of the same concept. The trouble is that I don't think that the idea has advanced enough over the intervening years. The machine itself is ugly and childish, and the standard of currently available software is pretty dismal (where are all the fast action shoot 'em ups for instance – most of the games appear to be nothing more than variations of the *Donkey Kong* theme). However there's no doubting that the machine has some real possibilities – the full screen graphics and expansive sound system present software manufacturers with unprecedented scope for developing new and exciting games. The only aspect of package which really impressed me was the light gun. Actually holding a pistol in your hand and aiming at an on-screen enemy beats the hell out of pressing a red button on a joystick, and the days when your computerised opponents fire back are surely not too far off.

CIARAN BRENNAN

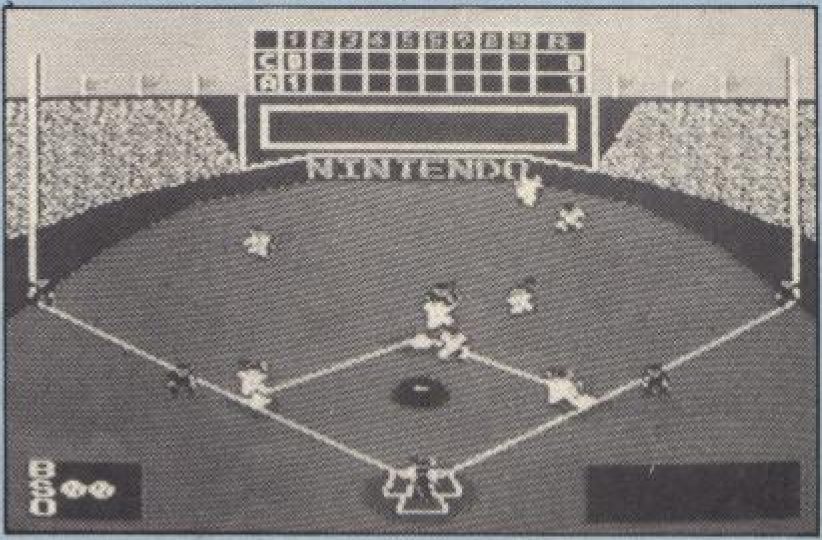
▼ GYROMITE – fun for all the family with ROB, as supplied with the *Deluxe Package*

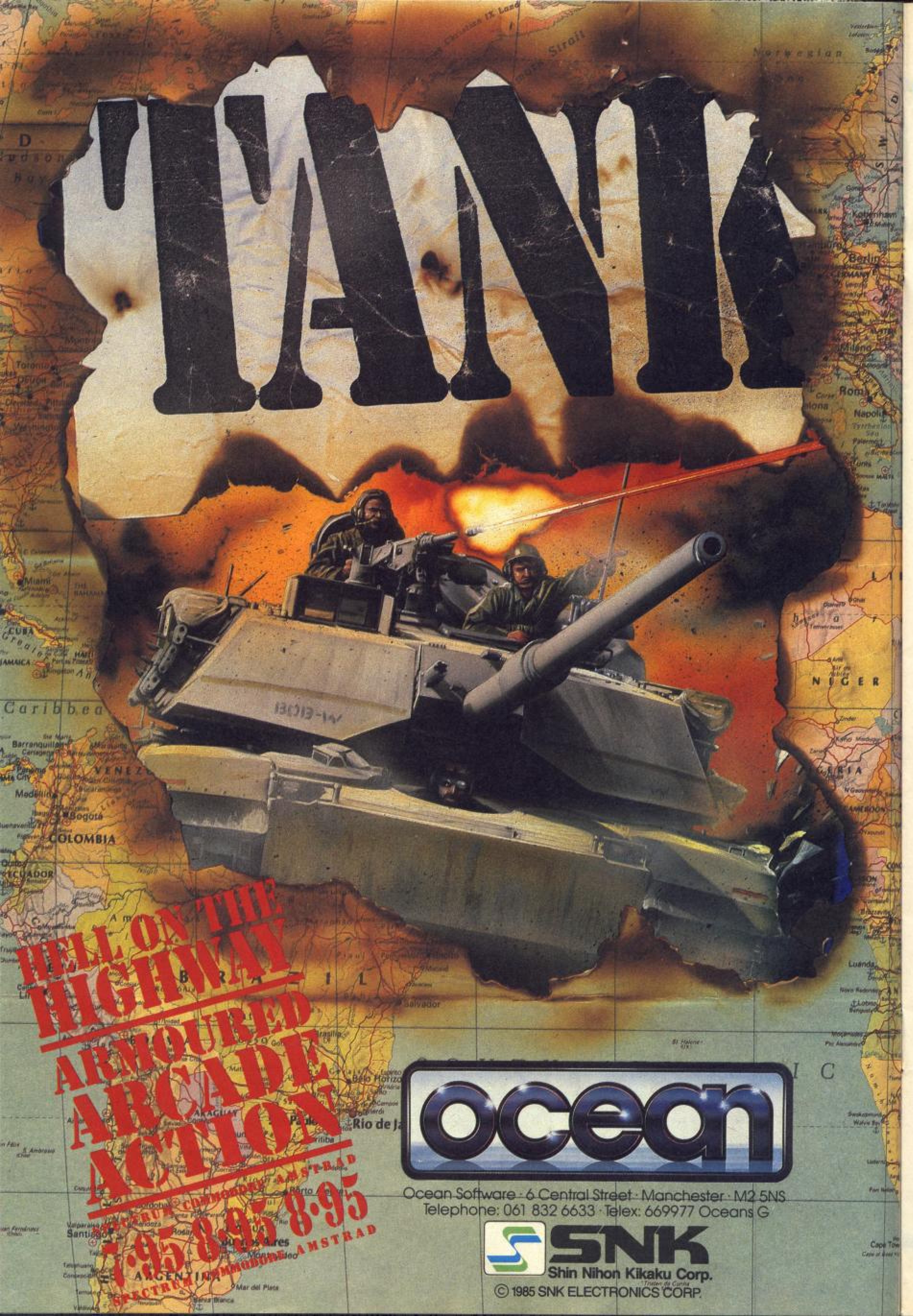


▼ WILD GUNMAN – simplistic light gun fun, with big, bold graphics and effective speech. The fun can be doubled with a plastic holster . . .

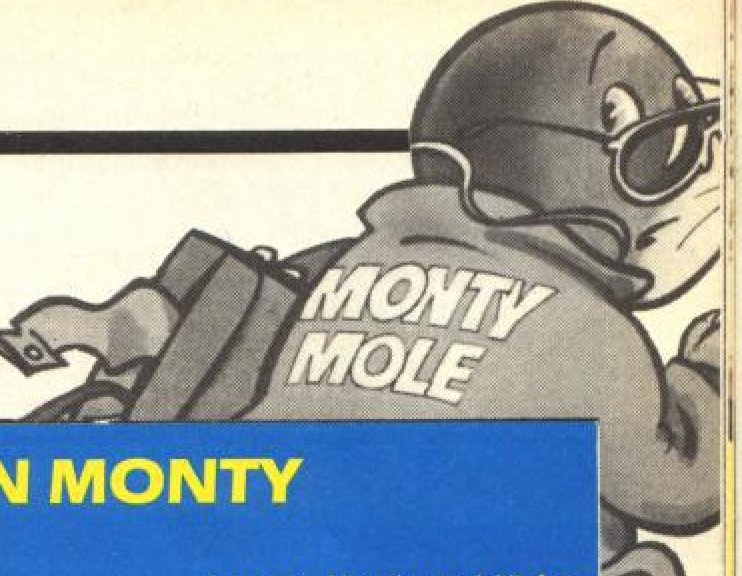


▼ BASEBALL – another exceptional sports game, this time with an American flavour – again for one or two players

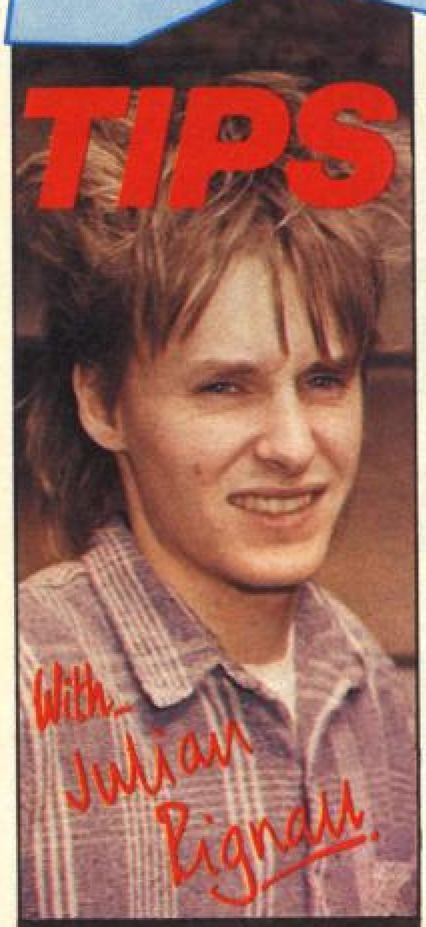



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ZZAP!



TIPS



What's happened since last month? Well, the annual fair has been and gone, giving us jaded hacks the chance to play some video games without having to travel 30 miles (our nearest arcade is in Shrewsbury) – *Bubble Bobble* (my favourite), *Out Run*, *Salamander* and *Kick And Run* were the highlights. It's rained a lot. Erm, and the sun has shone too . . .

Oh yes, and all these tips have arrived in the office. Look . . .

AUF WIEDERSEHEN MONTY (Gremlin Graphics)

Here are some extensive tips for this disappointing follow-up to a follow-up, dedicated especially to those who are moling around Europe and not coming up with enough readies to achieve the objective. Cheers to Paul Deakin **and** Peter Deverraux **of Burnley, Lancashire and** Leon Wilson **of Stevenage, Herts for their invaluable help.**

Collect the gun on the first screen, then go to the rocky caverns and get the air ticket. Continue upwards as far as possible, then go left and collect the extra life that sits in the tree (it looks like a cartoon rabbit).

Return to the room on the right, go back down and use the upside-down platform at the bottom right of the screen. Go down as far as possible, move one screen right and collect the football. Fly to France via the Spanish airport (left and up as far as possible) and collect both the Mona Lisa and the bottle of Chateau Blanc (white wine, not the oft seen red bottle).

Now fly to Germany (you need another air ticket) and deliver the wine to the screen on the right. Take the Mona Lisa to Italy, 'Itsa Daboss', and walk into the ladders. Also, take the football to Juventus. Use the tool kit from Dusseldorf to fix the cable car in Austria and get a free ride, and take the bacon from Denmark to Czechoslovakia (which is below East Germany).

That's all the help I've got so far on what to take and where to put it. A useful tip to remember is that cyan Airports take Monty from country to country while white coloured ones just take the ticket and don't go anywhere! Finally, don't visit the harbour in Greece until the island is fully visible at the bottom of the screen – Montos is to the left of the harbour.

ARMY MOVES (Ocean)

Failed soldiers take heed. If you can't battle through the first section and gain access to the next, simply follow the advice sent in by R Farrington **of Bidston, Birkenhead. Just load the first part and play it until you're bored. Switch off, load the second part and when prompted enter** 15863 **to start the next mission.**

V (Ocean)

Better late than never, eh? If you couldn't get very far with this rather difficult and disappointing tie-in, exhume it and play it again – but only after reading these highly useful tips from Jason Birnie**, a successful resistance fighter whose HQ is at Cranleigh in Surrey.**

The best thing to do when you start is keep on pressing RESTORE until your man appears on ship zero or four – starting at one of these makes the game a lot easier. Remember that every time you start a new game the labs and key points are in different positions – so don't go rushing around trying to draw a map.

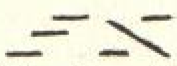
The primary task is to empty the red dust into the air, and this is achieved by getting the formulae from each ship. Only one of the two labs on each ship contains a formula, so if you can't find one in the first lab go to the other. If you find a formula straight away, move immediately to the next ship. When you have all five parts go to the air plant, call up the data recall card and examine the five symbols.

Translate the symbols to their values (see below) and add them all together. Now convert this number into base six and translate this number into lizard symbols, log onto the air plant computer and enter the symbols.

Example: say the symbols were:



They would represent 2 2 3 0 4, which added together make 11 – 11 in base 6 is 15, so the symbols to enter are:



When the red dust has permeated the atmosphere, go to the ship furthest away from the starting point, find the key point and plant a bomb. From this point you have about 30 minutes to escape or you'll go up with the rest of the place!

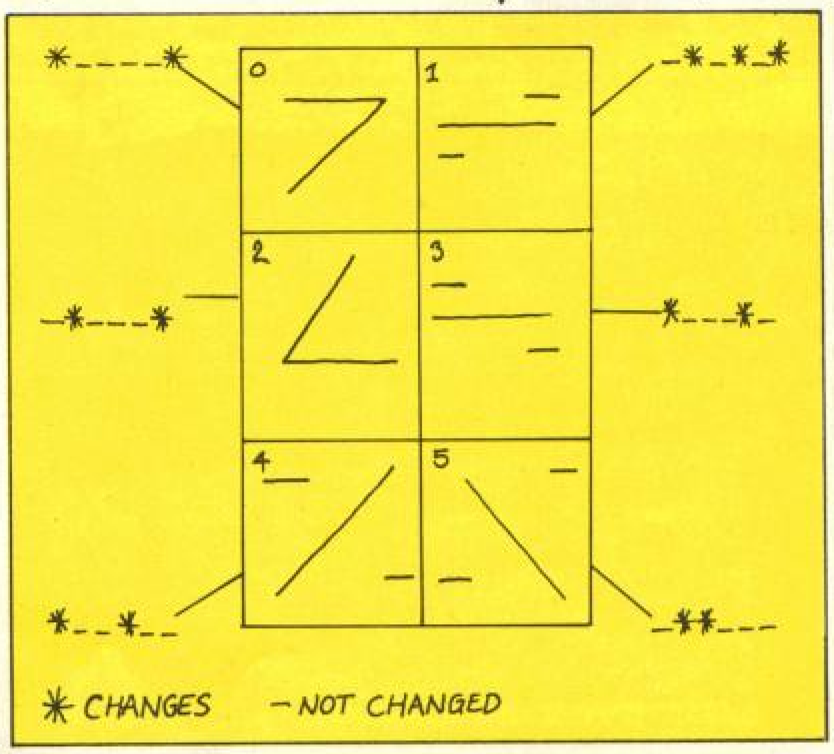
Move from ship to ship, finding the key points and planting bombs until you've used them all. Make your way to where you started, stand in front of the door of your ship in the docking bay and push the joystick up to complete the mission.

GENERAL TIPS

When planting a bomb, make sure that your location is at exactly the same as the key point to be bombed, or your actions will be futile. Beamer pads next to walls always take you down and pads not next to walls take you up.

You can recharge the laser gun in two different ways. Either find a location with two white vertical lines running from floor to ceiling with a white box in the middle, or use the fluorescent tube to the left of each lab.

If you're having trouble with the security doors, simply refer to the diagram below.



ACE (Cascade)

Ever fancied flying at 2000 mph (level flight) without using up fuel? 'Impossible' you may say, but it's true. All you have to do is fly to an altitude of 51000 feet or more (it's best to go higher as this ensures success). Turn off your thrust, wait until the nose is pointing straight down, and increase the thrust to full power. Wait until your velocity reaches 1700 before turning off your thrust. It is then highly advisable to level out because you will be hurtling towards the ground at 2000 mph. That high flying tip was from Peter Dower **of London SE16.**

ZZAP! TIPS

LISTINGS + POKES

ARMY MOVES (Ocean)

Okay soldier! Type in and RUN **this listing from Sergeant** Zoltan Kelemen **of the Tyreso division of the Swedish army. It doesn't make the game any easier, but at least once you've completed a level you don't have to go all the way back to the start again.**

```
ARMY MOVES (PART ONE) LISTING

3 FOR I=53231 TO 53260:READ A:POKE
I,A:C=C+A:NEXT I:IF C=3714 THEN SYS 53231
4 PRINT "ERROR IN DATA!"
5 DATA 198, 157, 169, 0, 162, 1, 168, 32, 186, 255, 32,
189, 255, 32, 213, 255, 169, 208, 141, 148
6 DATA 4, 96, 169, 96, 141, 135, 21, 76, 5, 1
```

ARMY MOVES (Part Two)

More of the same – just type in the listing and RUN **it before loading the second section. Don't forget the code!**

```
ARMY MOVES (PART TWO) LISTING

3 FOR I=53231 TO 53260:READ A:POKE
I,A:C=C+A:NEXT I:IF C=4233 THEN SYS 53231
4 PRINT "ERROR IN DATA!"
5 DATA 198, 157, 169, 0, 162, 1, 168, 32, 186, 255, 32,
189, 255, 32, 213, 255, 169, 208, 141, 148
6 DATA 4, 96, 169, 31, 141, 221, 4, 141, 133, 241, 76,
5, 1
```

EQUALIZER (Power House)

Become a really hard evolutionary, courtesy of this listing from George Allan **and** Gordon Paterson **of Aberdeen in bonny Scotland. Type in and** RUN **the listing and press play on tape. When the program loads you'll be completely invincible to everything mother nature can hurl at you.**

```
EQUALIZER LISTING

10 FOR Q=24613 TO 24646:READ A:POKE Q,A:LET
B=B+A:NEXT Q
15 IF B<>4220 THEN PRINT "DATA ERROR!":END
18 SYS 24613
20 DATA 169, 76, 141, 134, 101, 169, 55, 141
22 DATA 135, 101, 169, 96, 141, 136, 101, 76
23 DATA 139, 96, 173, 0, 220, 201, 109, 240
24 DATA 3, 76, 179, 101, 173, 248, 7, 76, 137, 101
```

POD (Mastertronic)

More Tim **and** Ian Fraser **POKEs – this time giving you a fab 'n' brill 'full screen' extravaganza. First of all insert a rewound cassette into the C2N, type** POKE 43,200:LOAD (RETURN) **and press play on tape.**

When ?SYNTAX ERROR **appears enter:**

POKE 43,1:POKE 808,237:SYS 65493 (RETURN)

Wait while the next section loads in, and when the cursor appears type:

POKE 49218,248:POKE 49219,252:SYS 49152 (RETURN)

When the computer resets, enter:

POKE 592,141:POKE 593,32:POKE 594,208:POKE 595,95 (RETURN)

POKE 8678,32:POKE 8679,80:POKE 8680,2:POKE 8681,76:POKE 8682,126 (RETURN)

POKE 8683,234 (RETURN)

And SYS 26112 **to restart the 'full-screen' program.**

MADE IN FRANCE II (ZZAP! DEMO)

Our first POKE for the faberoonie ZZAP! Sampler tape which came with the last issue. There's a little bug in Mr Minter's block beating program which sometimes swaps between player and computer control in the middle of the action. If this is happening regularly, simply type in this listing – it changes the player select key to f1. Cheers to Jim Blackler **for that. And don't forget to write in and let us know what you think of the cassette – remember, without your help we won't be able to produce an even better sampler next time.**

```
MIF II LISTING

10 FOR A=49226 TO 49252:READ Z:POKE
A,Z:NEXT:SYS 63276:POKE 896,192:SYS 62828
20 DATA 32, 74, 248, 169, 125, 141, 206, 1, 169, 224,
141, 207, 1, 169, 217, 141, 47, 1, 96
30 DATA 169, 4, 141, 37, 16, 76, 235, 2
```

FIRETRACK (Electric Dreams)

If you're not getting very far into this superlative vertically scrolling shoot 'em up and require an unlimited lives listing to help you along, here's what you're looking for. Tim **and** Ian Fraser **of Ruislip, Middlesex have come up with the goods once again, in the form of this easy-to-enter listing. Just type it in and follow the on-screen instruction.**

```
FIRETRACK LISTING

10 PRINT CHR$(147):FOR I=49152 TO 49229
20 READ A:C=C+A:POKE I,A:NEXT
30 IF C<> 8261 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN
DATA!":END
35 PRINT "DATA OK – SAVE LISTING FOR FUTURE
USE":END
40 PRINT "TYPE 'SYS 49152' TO START"
45 DATA 32, 44, 247, 169, 0, 141, 61, 3
50 DATA 169, 64, 141, 62, 3, 169, 69, 141
60 DATA 64, 3, 56, 32, 108, 245, 162, 94
70 DATA 189, 2, 64, 157, 161, 2, 202, 208
80 DATA 247, 169, 64, 141, 237, 2, 169, 2
85 DATA 141, 238, 2, 162, 20, 189, 57, 192
89 DATA 157, 64, 2, 202, 16, 247, 76, 105
90 DATA 3, 169, 77, 141, 206, 1, 169, 2
95 DATA 141, 207, 1, 76, 0, 16, 169, 165
99 DATA 141, 253, 47, 76, 0, 36
```

AUF WIEDERSEHEN MONTY (Gremlin Graphics)

On the scrolling title screen message it says that there's a cheat mode. Well, Phillip James **of Melksham, Wiltshire, 'got hacking' and found it – rather quickly I might add.**
Switch on the computer, move the cursor down to the middle of the bottom line of the screen – but DON'T scroll the screen. Type MONTY **and use the insert key to 'push' the word across so that the** Y **sits in the extreme bottom right hand corner. Be careful when you're doing this, otherwise you'll push the characters too far and scroll the screen.**
When this is done, move the cursor back to its original position below the R **of the** READY **prompt and press SHIFT/RUN STOP to load the game as normal. The upshot of doing this is 73 Monties to play with!**

BEYOND THE FORBIDDEN FOREST (US Gold)

Were you one of those who battled and battled the forest hostiles, but always ended up a pile of stone, destined to spend the rest of infinity being sat on by pigeons (could that be a spelling mistake)? Never mind, here's the easy way to finish the game courtesy of Sean **and** Adrian Meads.
Complete the first section (which doesn't take too much effort) and load in the second part. Play away until you die, reset the computer and enter SYS 15448 **to see the final screen (complete with 'luverlee' music and 'pwetty' graphics).**

WEST BANK (Gremlin Graphics)

How about some unlimited cowboys to help you blast away an unlimited amount of gangsters? Just load the program as normal, reset the computer and type POKE 12713,165 (RETURN) **and** SYS 4100 **to restart with your changes. Thanks to** Sean **and** Adrian Meads **of Basingstoke, Hants for that.**

VOID RUNNER (Mastertronic)

Want to battle it out on the really high levels, but are unable to get through the lower ones? Fret no more. Jim Blackler **from Lancaster has come up with one single solitary POKE to answer all your problems. Simply type:**

POKE 43,255:LOAD (RETURN)

To load the first part of the program. When the cursor appears type:

POKE 12653,173:POKE 43,1:LOAD (RETURN)

To load and run the rest of the program with unlimited lives.

MARIO BROS (Ocean)

It's that Zoltan Kelemen **fellow from Tyreso, Sweden again – and this time he has an unlimited lives listing for this rather disappointing arcade conversion. Just type it in,** RUN **the listing and press play on tape . . . Keep playing until you drop (off to sleep).**

```
MARIO BROS LISTING

3 FOR I=53229 TO 53256:READ A:POKE
I,A:C=C+A:NEXT I:IF C=3204 THEN SYS 53229
4 PRINT "ERROR IN DATA!"
5 DATA 198, 157, 169, 0, 162, 1, 168, 32, 186, 255, 32,
189, 255, 32, 213, 255, 169, 208, 141, 146
6 DATA 4, 96, 14, 0, 42, 76, 3, 1
```

FROST BYTE (Mikro-Gen)

These POKEs are a welcome relief – the game might be fun, but it's really difficult to rescue any of Hickey the Kreezer's mates. If you want to make life easier load the program, reset the computer and enter any of the following:
POKE 4388,165
For unlimited lives
POKE 4465,165
For unlimited twang
POKE 3358,165
For unlimited ammunition
POKE 4991,173
Stop sprite/sprite collision
POKE 4657,1-49
Change starting screen

And SYS 2825 **to restart the program with your selected changes. Thanks very much to** Sean **and** Adrian Meads **for those useful POKEs.**

CON-QUEST (Mastertronic)

For the two of you who are waiting for a continuation of the *Con-Quest* **tips, your patience has been rewarded. Feast your eyes on these short, but ever-so-helpful hints from** Nigel Collecott **and** Jason Hollier **of Lenham in Kent.**
Use the ice wand to kill red monsters and the fire wand to kill blue monsters. If you're carrying the poker you can walk through fire unscathed, and carrying the gold ring allows safe passage through mirrors.
Kill or avoid the monster with big ears – he steals objects – and remember that once you've read a book it can be dropped. The large key allows you to lock doors to the left and right (these are normally open). The ornate keys open cupboards, small keys open chests, and large keys open doors. By the way, ornate keys are hidden in chests.

THE GREAT ESCAPE (Ocean)

Are you spending too much time down and out in solitary confinement? Is your morale being diminished before you can make that Great Escape? If this is your situation, then use this brill Tim **and** Ian Fraser **'infinite morale' listing. Simply type in and** RUN **the program and follow the on-screen prompts.**

```
THE GREAT ESCAPE LISTING

5 PRINT CHR$(147)
10 FOR I=52992 TO 53055
20 READ A:C=C+A:POKE I,A:NEXT
30 IF C<>7212 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN
DATA!":END
35 PRINT "DATA OK-SAVE LISTING FOR FUTURE
USE":PRINT
36 PRINT "TYPE 'SYS 52992' TO START":END
40 DATA 32, 44, 247, 56, 234, 141, 32, 208
50 DATA 32, 108, 245, 169, 24, 141, 67, 4
60 DATA 169, 207, 141, 68, 4, 76, 99, 3
70 DATA 169, 99, 141, 111, 1, 169, 3, 141
75 DATA 112, 1, 169, 20, 133, 104, 169, 173
80 DATA 133, 105, 162, 7, 189, 56, 207, 157
85 DATA 99, 3, 202, 16, 247, 76, 20, 173
90 DATA 169, 165, 141, 191, 67, 76, 190, 95
```

DUET (Elite)

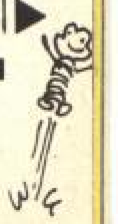
Remember all those adverts announcing the imminent release of *Commando 86* **and then it never appeared. Well, this is what became of it –** *Duet*, **a rather dull** *Gauntlet* **clone. Never mind. If you bought the** *Hit Pak* **compilation and have become bored of this freebie, then try out these little amendments. Simply load the program, reset the computer and enter the following:**

POKE 21040,234:POKE 21041,234:POKE 21042,234 (RETURN)
For unlimited energy

POKE 20303,113
Long range bullets for Player One
POKE 20330,113
Long range bullets for Player Two

POKE 29044,113
Invisibility for Player One
POKE 29058,113
Invisibility for Player Two

POKE 20401,8:POKE 20406,4
Faster movement for Player One
POKE 20428,8:POKE 20433,4
Faster movement for Player Two



HEARTLAND


REALM ONE THE GARDENS
KEY
FLOORS
LIFTS
DOORS UP
DOORS DOWN
CHAIRS
PLANTS
PILLARS
MAPS
PICTURES
MOUNTAIN RANGE
NEW BACKGROUND
PIPE WORK
WALL
DUNGEON DOORS
REALM TWO THE LAIR
A
A
B
B


REALM THREE THE SPACE STATION
BED = START
REALM FOUR THE VILLAGE
START
REALM FIVE THE CASTLE
& REALM SIX THE MOUNTAIN RANGE
START

ZZAP! TIPS

GREAT ESCAPE (Ocean)

If you're expecting a 'leave your brain in neutral and simply follow the instructions to complete the game' – forget it. The words below detail all the objects in the camp and their uses – you have to work out what to do with them. Don't forget to use the map (and the infinite morale listing) to help you make that break for freedom.

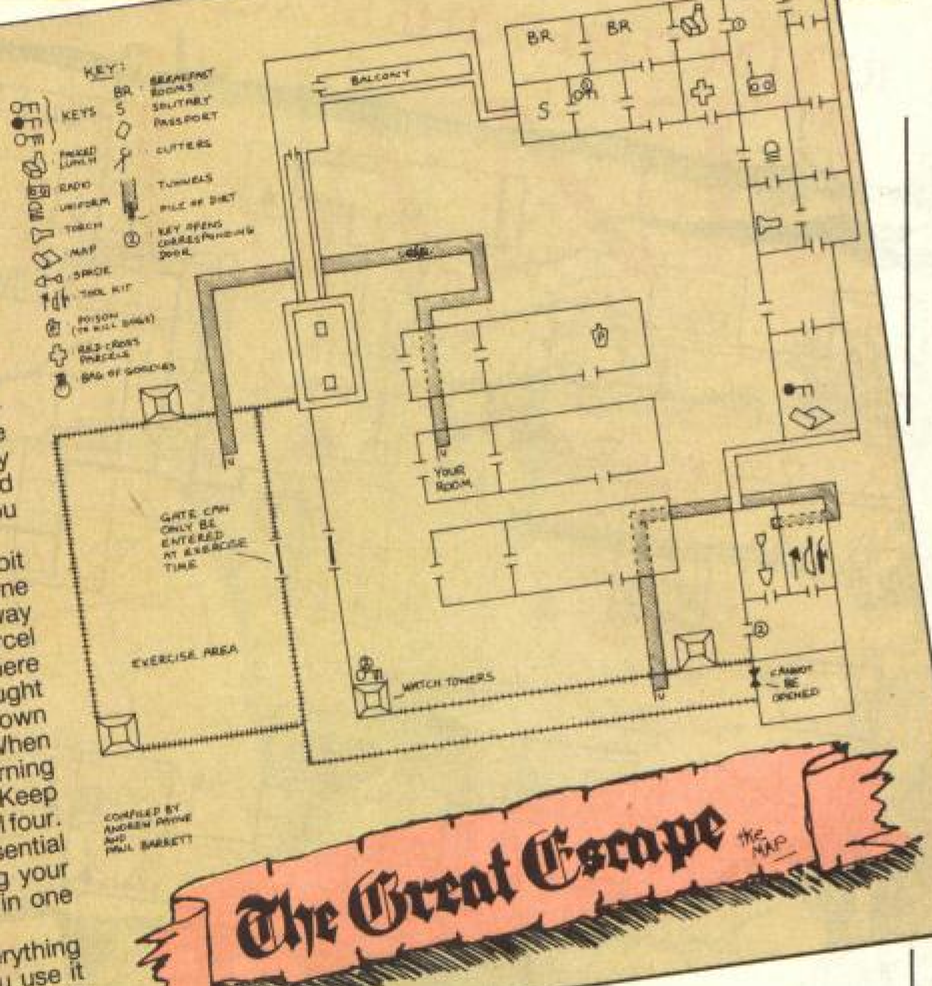
There are three keys around the camp which are used to gain access to the more inaccessible parts of the castle. The first key is easily found in the room next to the cells, and using it gives to rooms containing a German uniform. This is every useful because if you wear it, you can explore the out of bounds rooms with a reasonable degree of safety. Ordinary soldiers don't cart you off to solitary if you're discovered, but beware of the Commandant – he spots you straight away. Still on the subject of the uniform: it's advisable not to be wearing the uniform when you escape or you are shot as a spy!

The torch is needed to explore the underground tunnel. The tunnel is also a good place to hide your stolen objects, otherwise under the stove in your hut, or the red cross room are a pretty safe bet.

The wire cutters are the most useful object in the whole game, and without them there is no escape. The bar of chocolate acts as a great distraction – just give it (don't drop it) to a fellow prisoner and he attracts the guards' attention so that you can negotiate the fence. The compass is absolutely essential in order to escape and it's fairly self explanatory what you do with it!

The Red Cross parcels are a bit of a nuisance, as you only get one a day. However, there is a way around this. Get the first parcel that arrives and hide it somewhere safe. Deliberately get caught doing something bad and thrown in solitary for the night. When you're released the next morning another parcel arrives . . . Keep on doing this until you have all four. The shovel is another essential object – with it you can dig your way through the blockage in one of the tunnels.

Right, that's what everything does, but what should you use it for, when and how? There's a prize on offer for the best escape plan!



THE SYDNEY AFFAIR (Infogrames)

This is a pretty complicated game, and as you can see elsewhere in this issue, the skimpy instructions weren't appreciated. Oh well, help is at hand, in the form of these very comprehensive tips. I don't know who sent them in because he or she didn't put a name or address on the solution. Whoever you are, mystery person, your help is greatly appreciated . . .

PART ONE

First of all take a photo of Mr Sydney's right pocket to find a key. Take a photo of his briefcase and press **f7**. Take down all the information shown and press **f7** again to see a black and white photo of a couple kissing. Next, take a photo of his jacket to find his wallet and write down the information given. Press **RETURN** to access the second location and take photos of the vase, the floor, the curtains and the window frame. Your efforts are rewarded with a fingerprint, a camel cigarette butt and a 7 x 64 calibre cartridge. Now load the next section.

PART TWO

NB: Write down all statements

First, get a statement from a Witness – no name and address is needed. Next, get a statement from Maitre Decole and then one from Mrs Sydney (her address is given in the wallet). Hubert Decole comes after that, and then you have to get another one from Mrs Sydney.

Get an autopsy on Mr Sydney and a ballistic on the spent cartridge – take down the information on both. Get a statement from the Caretaker of St James Square, and then ask for another one from him to get an address at Blatin Street.

In Mr Sydney's briefcase is the name R Renard. Type Mr Renard and Blatin Street to get a statement from a private detective. Another statement is required from Mrs Sydney.

Mr Sydney had two children, Sylvie and Ludovic. Get statements from each and Sylvie says she recognises the man in the photo. Ask Mrs Sydney for another statement and she gives you the address of her cousin, Tino Di Nallo. Get two statements from the housekeeper, Peggy Gachet – her address is the same as the Sydneys'.

The next statement is from Tino Di Nallo – and he admits to having an affair with Mrs Sydney. Get another statement from Ludovic to find that he knows Tino very well, then ask Tino for a statement to find out about his national service. Ask Ludovic for another statement to find out about a 'Sergeant'.

Go back to Tino and get another statement, then go to messages and type CRRJ LYON to find out who the sergeant is (just type 'sergeant' after typing your destination). Type CIAJ CLERMONT and Patrick Languille to find his criminal record. Next type STCHELY and Patrick Languille again and get a statement from him (for his address just type STCHELY).

Get a statement from Tino, and get another statement from the Witness to discover that he positively identifies the man running from the scene of the crime as Patrick. Press 'comparison' and type PATRICK LANGUILLE. Take down all the information given and press **SPACE** for more. Get another statement from Patrick, use 'comparison' and type TINO D'NALLO. Get another statement from Patrick and do another comparison on him.

Perform a ballistic on the hole in the wall, do another comparison on Tino and get a statement from him. Get another statement from Tino to get a short confession from him admitting that he's responsible for Sydney's death, and press **SPACE** a couple of times to get the full confession.

Get a statement from Patrick for a confession from him, and press **SPACE** a couple of times for a full confession. Finally, arrest Patrick Languille for the murder of Mr Sydney, then sit back in your comfy chair (no, not the comfy chair – CB), put your feet up, smile smugly to yourself and make a cuppa.

PANTHER (MAD)

Unlimited lives for this competent shoot 'em up are yours for the asking – just do what Jim Blackler **says . . . Rewind the cassette and type in:**

POKE 43,255:LOAD (RETURN)

When the READY **prompt appears enter:**

POKE 43,1 (RETURN)
105 POKE 14370,165 (RETURN)
RUN (RETURN)

To load and run the rest of the program with more cans of tuna than you can ever imagine. Well, the space ship does look a bit like a can of tuna . . .

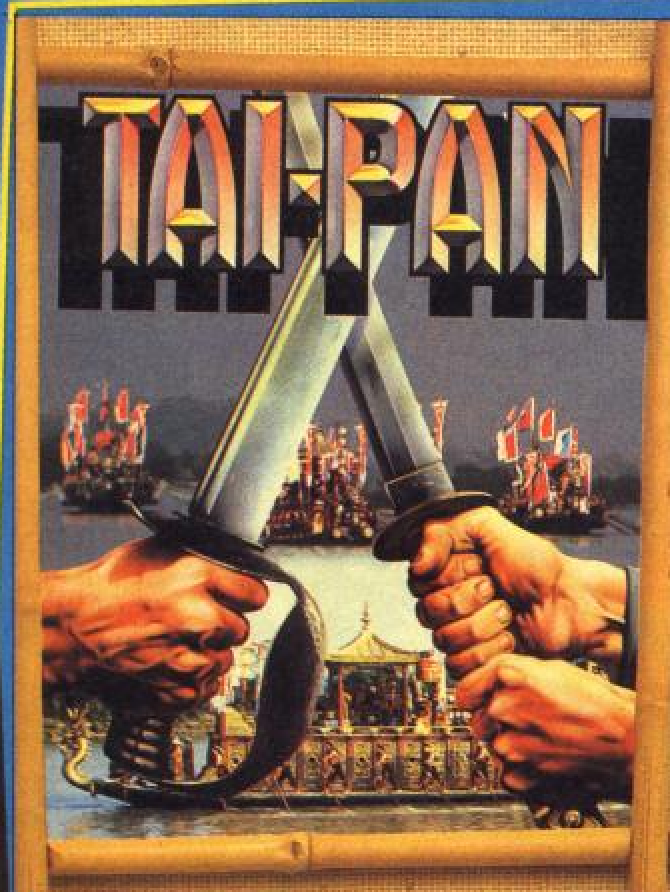
And there's the final whistle! Sean **and** Adrian Meads **of Basingstoke, Hants are a pair of lucky dudes this month because they've won £20 worth of software for their great set of POKEs (there are more of them next month). If you have anything in the way of POKEs, maps, tips, hints, cheats or whatever then send them in to me at** ZZAP! TIPS, ZZAP! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.

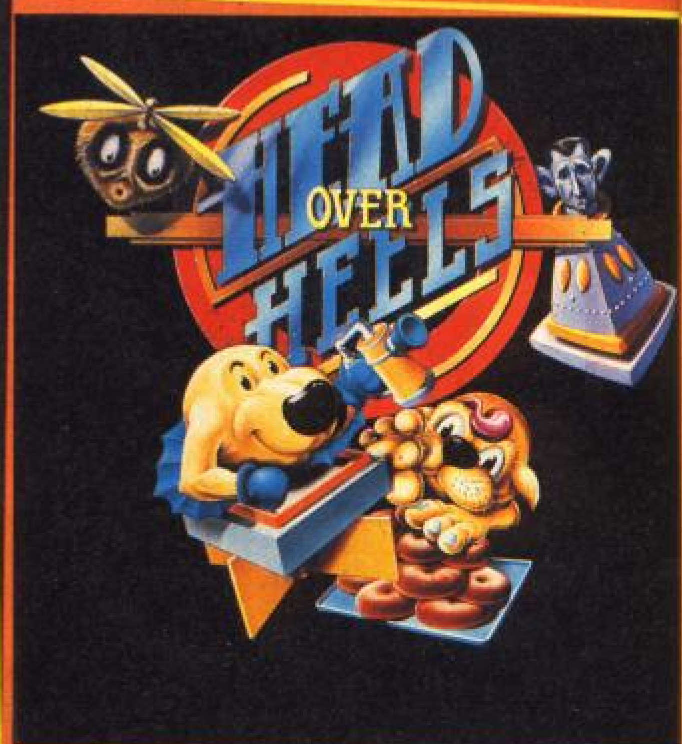
By the way – has anyone got POKEs for Ocean's brilliant *Head Over Heels*? **It's just arrived in the office, unfortunately a little too late for review, and we've been playing it like mad . . . but can't get to any of the crowns. If you can help in any way, send your POKE in, marking your envelope** Head Over Heels Pokes Right Here! **and send them to the usual address . . .**



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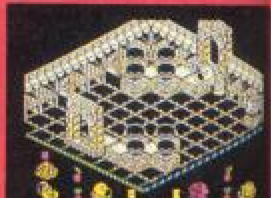
THE ART O







From the author of SHOGUN, James Clavell, comes **TAI PAN** and a terrific new game packed with action and stunning graphics. TAI PAN is the exciting story of a man and an island. Become Dirk Struan – a pirate, a smuggler, a manipulator of men achieving riches beyond imagination. Enter a world of blood, sin, treachery, conspiracy and murder – a game of Grand entertainment!



Authors of No. 1 Blockbuster, Batman, Jon Ritman and Bernie Drummond present **'Head over Heels'** – Hi! My name's Mr. Head. Some say I'm the one with the brains but I don't think my flat footed friend would agree. I'm a real sharp shooter, but without my pal Mr. Heels I'd get nowhere fast . . . or slow! I can jump like a flea and even glide but Heels is the Daley Thompson of the two of us – he's FAST! Together, if we can find each other, we really do make an awesome twosome, and that's the only wa
we can overcome the emperor Blacktooth.

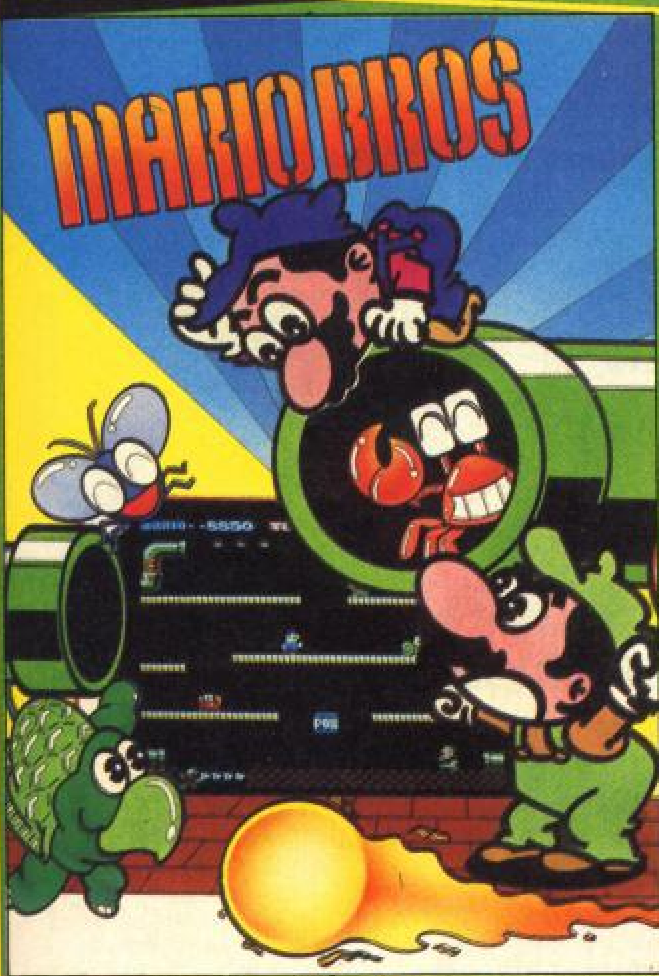
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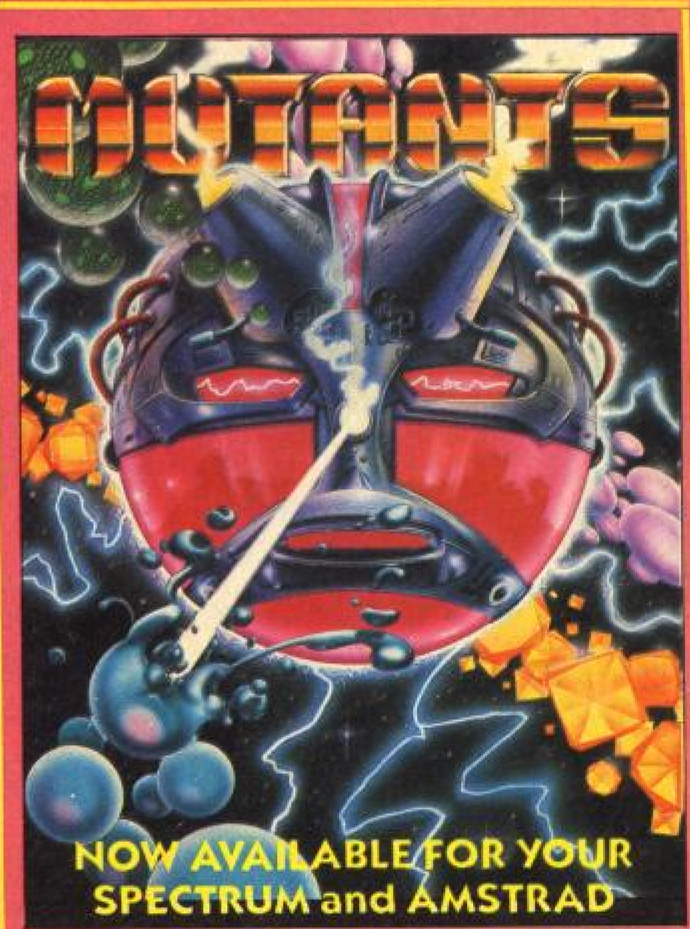
IS PLAYING T

Screen shots taken from various computer formats.

OCE

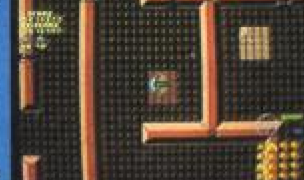
OF GAMES







Now hot from the arcades comes Nintendo's Mario Bros for your home computers featuring Fireballs, Sidestepper, Fighterfly and of course – Mario and Luigi! Flip those pests and kick 'em off the pipes, but don't lose your footing on those slippery floors. Play as a team or against each other; either way you're in for a scream with Mario and Luigi – the **MARIO BROS.**



I took on the Mutants knowing I was armed to the teeth with missiles, mines, torpedoes and more . . . I could even choose where I wanted to fight! How could I lose? . . . How DID I lose? I've never seen anything like it . . . they came at me in droves, in swirling gases, in forms spinning a deadly gossamer and there were more to come. I know now that one form of Mutant will never escape a well planned pattern of mines. It's just the beginning . . . but I must build the ultimate weapon or I'll NEVER be rid of them all! **"An essential purchase – miss it and you're missing something special" – Zzap**

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A GOLDEN SUMMER

Steve Jarratt takes a brief look at what US Gold have to offer for 1987 . . .

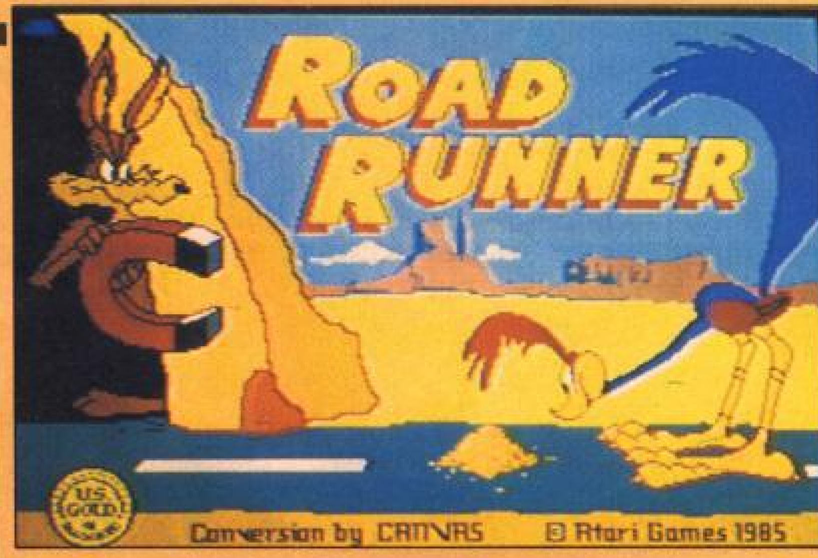


ROAD RUNNER

There are several major releases due from US Gold this summer, the most notable being the conversion of the Atari coin-op *Road Runner*, based on the famous Warner Brothers' cartoon character of the same name.

Sticking closely to the arcade format, the action involves guiding the Road Runner through the twisting, tortuous roads of an American desert, gathering birdseed and avoiding the clutches of Wile E Coyote – the ravenous and devious bane of RR's life.

Nearing completion, the game looks very smart indeed and has some wonderful animation on the main characters. Hopefully it should be in your shops from June onwards, at which time you can make up your own minds. Meep, meep.



▲ **A shot of the title screen from the 64 version of** Road Runner

▼ **Wile E Coyote – knife and fork in hand – in readiness to begin the chase, on the soon-to-be-released 64 conversion**



INDIANA JONES

Most people will need no introduction to this Spielberg/Lucas silver screen hero. The mild-mannered archaeologist with a mean line in whip-cracking is soon to be winging his way to the 64 in US Gold's second coin-op conversion, licensed from Atari's *Indiana Jones And The Temple of Doom*.

Following the film's plot, you guide Indiana Jones in his fight against the Thuggees, with the ultimate aim of freeing the children who are held as slaves in their mines. Indiana re-enacts many of the film's hairier moments – including the roller-coaster railway ride in the underground mine, and the climactic sea of fire bullwhip fight within the temple itself.

The hero should return in July.

▼ **The Hero rides a subterranean roller-coaster in the coin-op version of** Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom



ACCOLADE COMICS

Accolade – whose previous releases include *Psi-5*, *Hardball* and *Law Of The West* – are currently putting the finishing touches to *Accolade Comics*, an interactive program in which you can alter the story's dialogue and thus influence the game's progress.

Although currently sitting on five sides of disk, US Gold are working in conjunction with Accolade to produce a workable cassette version, which should appear some time after the disk release in July.

▼ **One of Accolade's many comic pages which currently fill five sides of disk!**



STREET SPORT BASEBALL

The now famous Epyx sports simulations take a strange turn with *Street Sport Baseball*, where, instead of the polished refinement of professional sports simulations, baseball is played in the street by kids in baggy shorts and oversized caps. This promises to be of the usual Epyx standard, including neat touches such as dogs that run onto the pitch and steal the ball during play!

Again, a release date has been set for July – so start saving.

▼ **You are provided with both an elevated and overhead viewpoint of the proceedings in Epyx'** Street Sports Baseball



PLANNED ARCADE CONVERSIONS

The latter half of 1987 will also see the release of several further arcade conversions from US Gold, including *Last Mission*, *Rygar* and *Solomon's Key*.

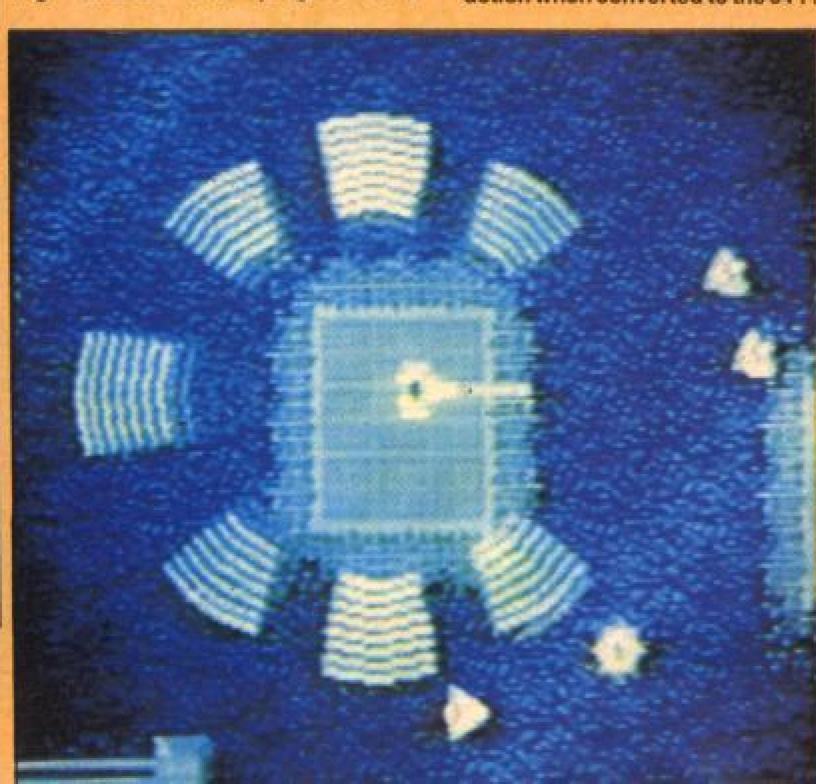
Last Mission is an eight-directional scrolling shoot 'em up, based on the little known Data-East coin-op of the same name. Quite simply, it's a hectic 'blast anything that moves' game – the aim is to kill . . . or be killed. The arcade version is fun, but you'll have to wait until September to see the 64 version.

The second conversion planned for September features the legendary warrior from the Tecmo game, *Rygar*.

Battling through parallax scrolling forests and jungles of primaeval Earth, Rygar hacks and slays his way past evil creatures using a vicious yo-yo cum chain-saw weapon. Once again the aim is simple – annihilation of everything except yourself.

Finally, another Tecmo game gets the 64 treatment in *Solomon's Key* – a deceptively playable platform game where you destroy and build blocks in order to reach keys. These unlock the doors to the following screens, assisting your progress through the game. Due out in August, *Solomon's Key* looks like good material for an exciting conversion, but we'll have to wait and see.

▼ Last Mission **promises plenty of action when converted to the 64 . .**





▲ **The sun begins to set as Rygar battles on in the Tecmo coin-op**

▼ **Oblivious to the scenic waterfall beneath, Rygar continues his path of destruction**



▼ **Lovely graphics on the arcade game disguise the inherent simplicity of** Solomon's Key



▼ **The door (centre screen) has been opened ready to enter the next level**



OINK!

A SWINE OF A COMPETITION!

VISIT THE OINK! OFFICES AND APPEAR IN A FABULOUS OINK! PHOTO STORY!

PLUS! AN OINK! T-SHIRT, AN OINK! MUG AND A COPY OF THE GAME!

AND IF THAT WASN'T ENOUGH, THERE ARE 20 MUGS AND COPIES OF THE GAME FOR THE RUNNERS-UP!



Oink is a magazine run by pigs – a bit like ZZAP! really, although the editor, Uncle Pigg, is probably a lot cleaner than Gaz Penn. You wouldn't believe the state of his desk – actually, you would. It's disgusting.

The game however, is not so crude. Unless of course you're a bit like Mary Lighthouse and object to playing *Breakout* with a giant pimple!

Oink! – the computer game comprises three sub-games. One is a *Breakout* variant in which Pete's Pimple is used to break down a series of Oink-orientated walls. In the second the player takes control of Rubbishman as he flies a along a series of horizontally scrolling tubes. The final game is a *Gauntlet* derivative where the player guides Tom Thug around an alien-filled landscape. The object throughout is to collect page panels, and thus get the magazine ready for the printers within an allotted time.

We've had a piggin' good idea for this competition . . . it's a spot the difference – with a difference. Pete, of Pete's Pimple fame, woke up one morning to find – quite unsurprisingly – a large pimple on the end of his nose. Here he can be seen in front of the bathroom mirror, pondering on the zituation. Now, what we want you to do is find the ten differences between picture A and its mirror image, picture B, and then we want you to tell us what Pete is thinking – but in no more than 15 words. Wit, hyperbole, innuendo, dramatic irony, sarcasm – consider them all, then send the completed entry to gorgeous Glenys Powell at: **A SWINE OF A COMPETITION, ZZAP! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1AQ.** Entries should be in no later than July 9th

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Alternative character Rom fitted in minutes – no soldering required.
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Toolkit IV has, for some time, been generally recognised as the best disk toolkit available. The only problem for Datel was that it was distributed by someone else!! So when the opportunity to obtain the rights came our way, we jumped at it. And what's more, in keeping with our general pricing policy, we are offering it at less than half the previous selling price. A disk toolkit is an absolute must for the serious disk user and TOOLKIT IV has more features than most for less:
DISK DOCTOR V2 – Read and write any track and sector including extra and renumbered tracks. Repair damaged sectors. Look underneath read errors.
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PLUS A zoom feature for single Pixel editing while viewing, the results at full scale. ☐ Powerful cut and paste facility, shapes can be picked up, moved around, repeated and saved. ☐ Full Load and Save feature for pictures, shapes and windows which are supplied.
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Using the Lazerwriter a child can use it as a colouring book or a computer artist can create superb graphics.

ZZAP! READERS' CH

GAMES TOP 30

1 *(1)* **WORLD GAMES** *(15%)*
US Gold/Epyx

2 *(2)* **LEADER BOARD** *(10%)*
US Gold/Access

3 *(3)* **GAUNTLET** *(9%)*
US Gold

4 *(9)* **DELTA** *(4%)*
Thalamus

5 *(10)* **THE SENTINEL** *(3%)*
Firebird

6 *(4)* **URIDIUM** *(3%)*
Hewson

7 *(7)* **GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS** *(3%)*
Elite

8 *(14)* **NEMESIS** *(2%)*
Konami

8 *(7)* **SANXION** *(2%)*
Thalamus

10 *(16)* **PARK PATROL** *(2%)*
Firebird

11 *(5)* **GREEN BERET**
Imagine, £8.95 cass

12 *(6)* **SUPER CYCLE**
US Gold/Epyx

13 *(11)* **GUNSHIP**
Microprose

14 *(-)* **INTO THE EAGLE'S NEST**
Pandora

15 *(23)* **ELITE**
Firebird

16 *(15)* **THE SACRED ARMOUR OF ANTIRIAD**
Palace Software

17 *(20)* **ARKANOID**
Imagine

18 *(17)* **ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE**
Software Projects

19 *(22)* **PAPERBOY**
Elite

20 *(29)* **CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING**
US Gold/Epyx

21 *(13)* **INTERNATIONAL KARATE**
System 3

22 *(-)* **FLASH GORDON**
Mastertronic

23 *(12)* **PARALLAX**
Ocean

24 *(28)* **MERCENARY**
Novagen

25 *(18)* **180**
Mastertronic

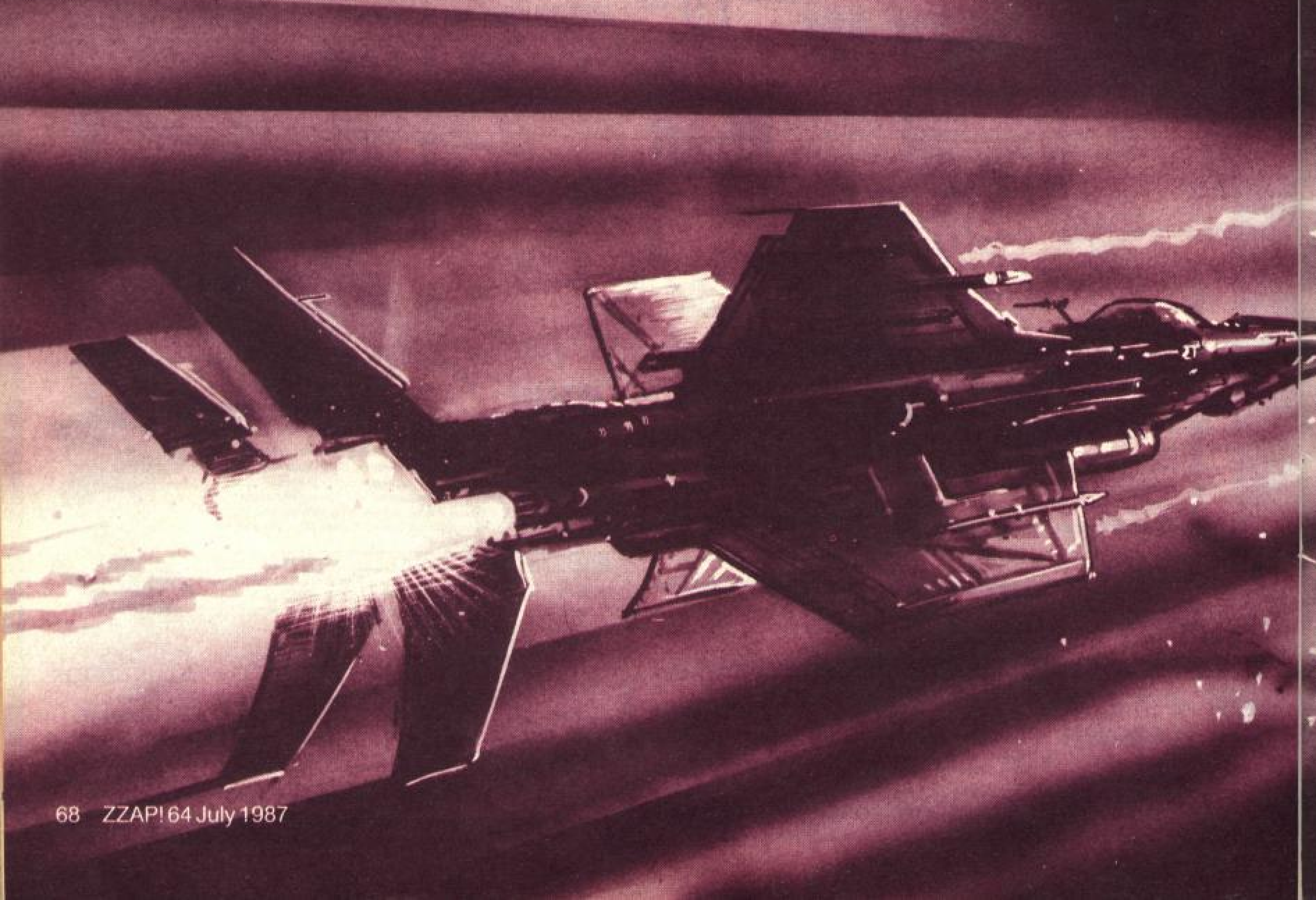
26 *(26)* **SUMMER GAMES II**
US Gold/Epyx

27 *(24)* **ALIENS**
Electric Dreams

28 *(30)* **MUTANTS**
Ocean

29 *(21)* **DRUID**
Firebird

30 *(-)* **DAN DARE**
Virgin



HARTS

JULY 1987

MUSIC TOP 10

1 *(1)* **SANXION** *(25%)*
Thalamus
Loading Music (Rob Hubbard)

2 *(6)* **DELTA** *(7%)*
Thalamus
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)

3 *(3)* **GREEN BERET** *(7%)*
Imagine
Loading Music (Martin Galway)

4 *(2)* **KNUCKLEBUSTERS** *(6%)*
Melbourne House
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)

5 *(8)* **PARALLAX** *(6%)*
Ocean
Title Screen Music (Martin Galway)

6 *(4)* **THRUST** *(5%)*
Firebird
Firebird (Rob Hubbard)

7 *(-)* **MIAMI VICE** *(5%)*
Ocean
'Title Screen' Music (Martin Galway)

8 *(5)* **GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS** *(4%)*
Elite
Main Theme (Mark Cooksey)

9 *(7)* **FLASH GORDON** *(4%)*
Mastertronic
Title Screen Music (Rob Hubbard)

10 *(-)* **WARHAWK** *(3%)*
Firebird
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)



ZZAP! 64
CHART VOTING COUPON

(Please write in BLOCK CAPITALS)

Name ....
Address ....
....
....
Postcode ....

If I win the £40 worth of software I would like the following games:
(Game and Software House)

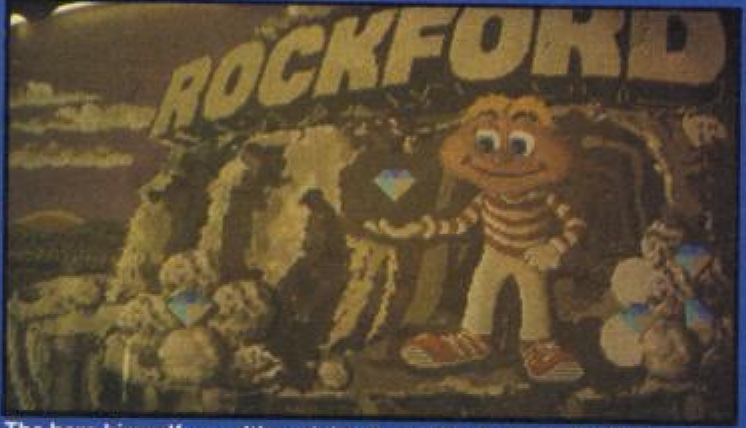
T-Shirt Size S/M/L

I am voting for the following five games:
1 ....
2 ....
3 ....
4 ....
5 ....

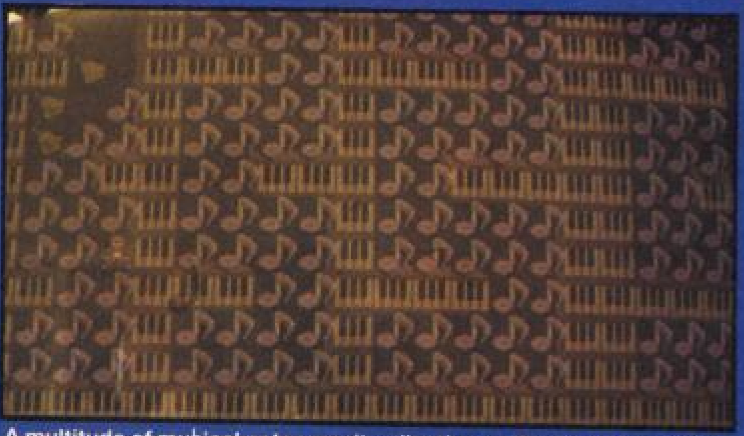
I am also voting for the following piece of music:
(Commodore 64 ONLY)

....

ZZAP! CHARTS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB



The hero himself . . . although he doesn't look much like his computer counterpart!


A multitude of musical notes await collection as Rockford takes the role of a conductor


The window behind the machine causes all sorts of lighting problems as the cameraman snaps Rockford in space



Having picked up the required amount of notes, Rockford the conductor prepares to advance to the next world

TAKING HOME TECHNOLOGY INTO THE ARCADES

NOT CONTENT with dominating the budget scene, **Mastertronic** are launching themselves into the arcade market with a brand new video game system, based around the Commodore Amiga board. **Arcadia**, the coin-op subsidiary of the budget giant, has licensed the boards from Commodore and fitted an extra 1.5 megabytes of memory, making the system more powerful than the majority of existing dedicated consoles!

Games are due to be released on a ROM board format, allowing the arcade owner to slip out an old game and plug in the new without having to remove the main processing unit – thus offering cheap upgrades. Better still, a ROM can carry a further 6.5 megabytes of data, giving a huge potential for future games.

The console is set inside a wide cabinet with two joysticks, fully equipped with a pair of fire buttons on either side. The cabinets are well designed, allowing simultaneous two player action without any crowding – a problem often encountered with some of the slimmer two player cabinets.

Two new titles, *Road Wars* and *Rockford* are currently being designed and programmed by Arcadia's Top Secret British development team and will appear on test sites throughout the country towards the end of the summer.



A further three titles are planned by the end of this year, and the release of several new titles from Arcadia's American counterpart is also a possibility.

A bonus for computer users is that Mastertronic will be converting the titles to all home micros, although it's not certain which label the conversions will appear on.

Arcadia aren't the only company to licence Amiga technology. Bally/Midway, producers of *Rampage* have just announced that they too have licensed similar boards for the development of their new range. Both Bally and Arcadia have already had talks to see whether it will be viable to make their systems compatible – at present there has been no agreement reached.

ROAD WARS

THE first of the new Arcadia titles is a 16 level first person perspective 3D shoot 'em up set along a straight, and seemingly never-ending road. The objective is to travel along the highway in a spherical vehicle and blast any obstacles and hazards that present themselves.

But it's the enforced two-player action which makes *Road Wars* different – the two vehicles travel side by side, bumping and bashing one another if a pair of psychopaths are wielding the joysticks. Excess violence can lead to one craft being forced off the freeway, resulting in the loss of life and much grievance! If a human opponent is absent the computer provides a forceful and enthusiastic ally.

The craft have two modes of operation, both of which are necessary for survival. In Gun mode the craft opens up like a flower and a double-barrelled laser blooms, which is used to despatch hostiles and roadside generators (sending deadly bolts of lighting arcing across the road). Shield mode reduces the craft to a compact ball, allowing it to bash into hostile vehicles unscathed – this however does not protect the craft from lightning.

At the end of each level a hole appears which the buggy enters to progress to the next level. On later levels only one hole appears – with friend becoming foe as the fight for access begins.

ROCKFORD

RECOGNISE the name? Yes, not content with making four separate appearances on both the Commodore and Atari, twice on the Spectrum and Amstrad, on the Atari ST, the MSX systems *and* in these hallowed pages as margin star, the versatile insect is now appearing in his very own arcade game. Officially licensed from First Star's *Boulderdash* series, the structure and playability is virtually identical to that of the computer originals – and that means addictive!

This time round there are 40 different screens in which Rockford plays ten different roles: Astronaut, Scuba Diver, Conductor, Musician, American Sports Star, Player, Miner, Gambler and Hunter. The traditional dirt, boulders, diamonds and hostiles take on different appearances as Rockford plays each character – as an astronaut the hero has to collect miniature suns and dodge falling planets, whereas eggs are the order of the day in cookery mode.

Rockford is thoughtfully designed, allowing the player to start on any of four worlds. However, progressing to the next world requires either a fair amount of skill or a large wallet (there's a costly continue option which requires continual feeding).

The character graphics and use of colour are rather disappointing considering the system's capabilities, but the game oozes playability and is fiendishly addictive. Something to look forward to, but be prepared to dig deep into your pocket.

WHAT'S New



If only they realised what lay ahead, the terror, the suffering, the noise, the microwaved lunch . . . The winners of our Piranha Combat Zone competition spent a happy day in the Essex countryside, meeting a wide variety of people – and shooting them. Pictured above are a number of ZZAP! squaddies (Penn, Rignall, Brennan and Liddon RIP), Helen Holland of Piranha (the one with the fish on her head) and the competition winners; Richard Jones, Elaine Oxley, Lisa Scullard, William Fox, David Edge, P A Pethers and Nigel Palmer. Watch out for a full report on the Combat Zone phenomenon in a future issue.

ENTERPRISING MELBOURNE HOUSE

ENTERPRISE is the new release from Melbourne House, based on the entrepreneurial exploits of a space trader, attempting to make his fortune around the galaxy's space lanes.

The game has a huge variety of alien planets with which to trade, and is a mixture of vector graphics (to simulate landing and flight from planet to planet), and text interaction between yourself and the alien computer systems. Initially appearing on Spectrum and Amstrad, the 64 version will surface some time in mid July.

PIRANHA BYTES

IT LOOKS like it could be a busy Summer for Piranha, with eight planned releases between now and October, including such gems as *Trap Door II*, continuing the saga of Berk and his fellow crawlies, and *Flunky*, which chronicles the exploits of a servant to the Royalty, set in the hallowed corridors of Buck House.

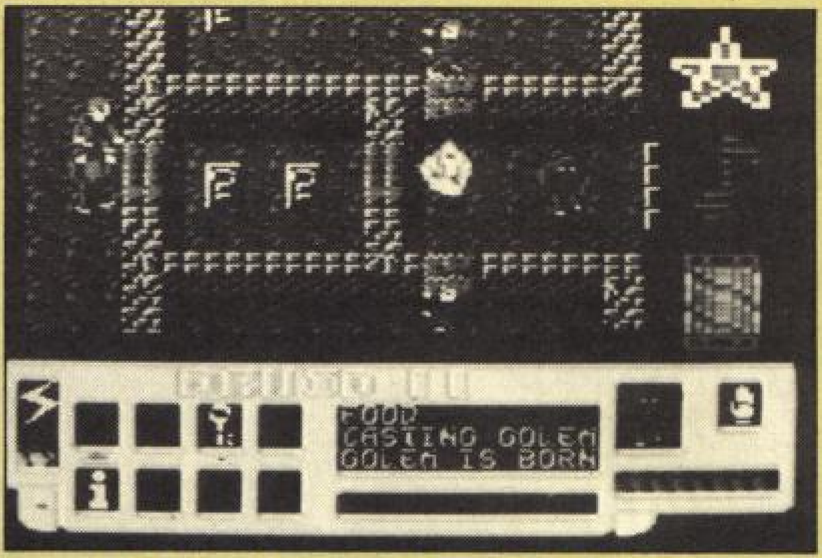
More notable perhaps is the release of *Yogi Bear*, the lovable Hanna-Barbera rogue from Jellystone Park, who is soon to be found wandering around the inside of your 64.

The game features all of the cartoon's major characters, including Yogi, Boo-Boo and the long suffering Ranger Smith.

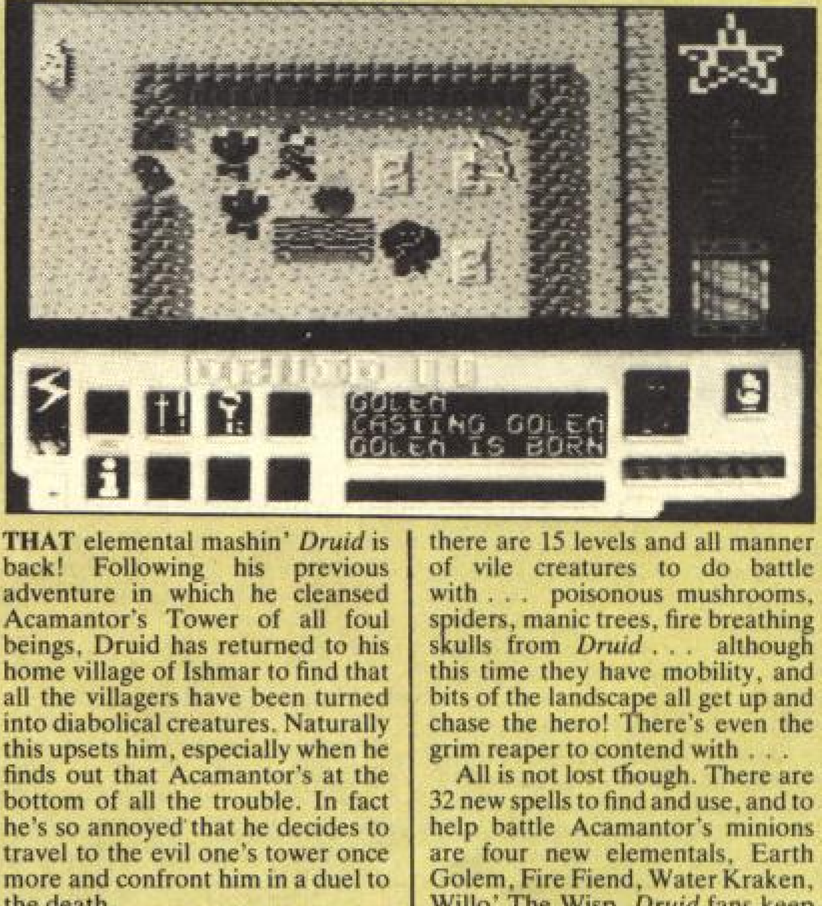
Taking the part of Yogi, it's your task to track down and rescue Boo-Boo, who is bear-napped at the beginning of the game. Yogi has to dodge hunters' guns and the sharp-talons of eagles during his mission.

Collecting food along the way keeps the bulging bruin from falling into hibernation, and the stolen campers' 'pickernick' baskets contain different colours which supply a code necessary to successfully rescue Boo-Boo at the end.

You only have one year in which to rescue your diminutive buddy, and the action takes place across four scrolling backdrops – one for each season. It looks like an October release for the finished product.



THE DRUID RETURNS



THAT elemental mashin' *Druid* is back! Following his previous adventure in which he cleansed Acamantor's Tower of all foul beings, Druid has returned to his home village of Ishmar to find that all the villagers have been turned into diabolical creatures. Naturally this upsets him, especially when he finds out that Acamantor's at the bottom of all the trouble. In fact he's so annoyed that he decides to travel to the evil one's tower once more and confront him in a duel to the death.

The action is portrayed in the same style as *Druid*, but this time there are 15 levels and all manner of vile creatures to do battle with . . . poisonous mushrooms, spiders, manic trees, fire breathing skulls from *Druid* . . . although this time they have mobility, and bits of the landscape all get up and chase the hero! There's even the grim reaper to contend with . . .

All is not lost though. There are 32 new spells to find and use, and to help battle Acamantor's minions are four new elementals, Earth Golem, Fire Fiend, Water Kraken, Willo' The Wisp. *Druid* fans keep a look out – Druid II should be reviewed next issue.

MARTECH MEGA–APOCALYPSE

MARTECH's follow up to *Crazy Comets* is finally due to hit the high street after almost two years of intensive programming by Comets' author Simon Nicol.

Entitled *Mega-Apocalypse*, the game promises several technical innovations, including 144 non-flickering sprites on-screen at one time (gross!), 100 simultaneously spinning stars of differing size and *five* channel sound, which utilises two separate speech channels with sampled dialogue and effects.

Finishing touches are provided by two people you may have heard of: Rob Hubbard and Bob Stevenson – handling sonics and graphics, respectively.

The gameplay runs along the lines of *Crazy Comets*, but with many improvements over the original, including increased manoeuvrability and the ability to accumulate extra firepower as you go along.

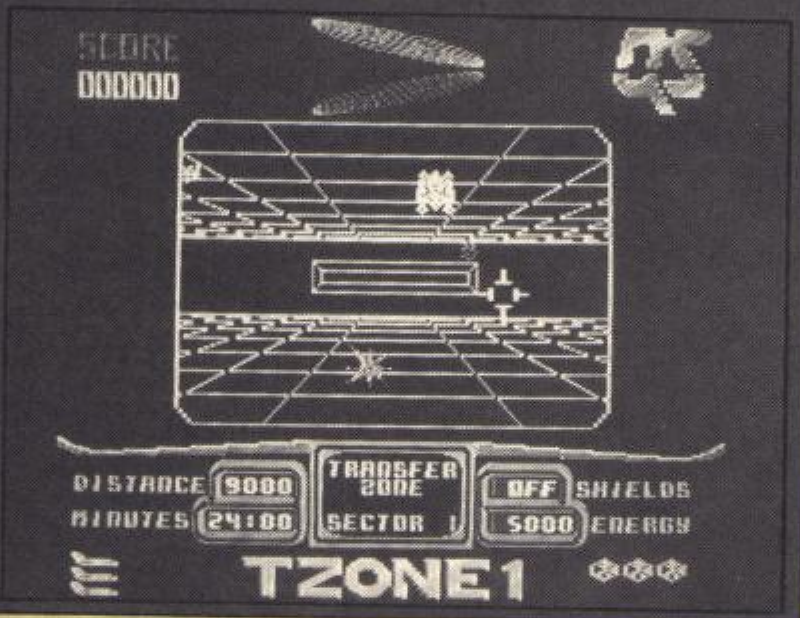
Simon says, 'It's basically everything I wanted *Comets* to be, but couldn't manage at the time.' The finished product is about a month or so away, and we're currently waiting with bated breath.

THE TUBE

A FORTHCOMING release from Quicksilva will be called *The Tube* – and no, it doesn't feature Jools Holland or Paula Yates. Promising plenty of blasting action, it's set in and around a huge matter transfer device, which is to be defended from invading aliens. The action takes place over three main areas and uses a different style of game for each section, including a Defender clone for the inside of the tunnel itself.

The Tube will be open for inspection by mid June.

A selection of shots from Quicksilva's The Tube



IF SHARKS COULD FLY . . .

BUT they can! The *Flying Shark* is a Tiger Shark bi-plane, in Firebird's new vertically scrolling shoot 'em up of the same name, due for release on their Gold label. Taking the role of a World War I fighter pilot, you fly across land and sea, avoiding enemy fighters and attempting bombing runs across enemy territory.

Bad news for those of you awaiting the re-release of the classic Activision games on the Firebird Silver label – for reasons known only to themselves, Firebird have put back the release date to early August. Still, they're well worth the wait and it gives you more time to save . . .

COIN-OP CONVERSIONS

STILL with Activision, it's rumoured that they have obtained the rights to a range of Capcom arcade games, including *Bionic Commando*, *Side Arms*, *Gunsmoke* and *Legendary Wings*. Activision were unavailable to confirm or deny the gossip, so we'll just have to wait and see.

Further to this month's feature, the grapevine is buzzing with unconfirmed reports that US Gold have acquired the rights to *Out Run* and possibly *Super Hang-On*. Again, only time will tell.

AND FROM CRL . . .

UP AND COMING releases from CRL include their second text-with-graphics adventure, *Frankenstein*, based on the famous novel by Mary Shelley. As with their previous offering, *Dracula*, this new shocker incorporates some gruesome digitised graphics, which have been deemed horrible enough to warrant a '15' rating from the British Board of Film Classification. Adventure fans who like being scared have only to wait for June to roll by, when the game comes out.

July then sees the release of their terribly serious combat game *Ninja Hamster*, and the slightly less serious *Traxxion*.

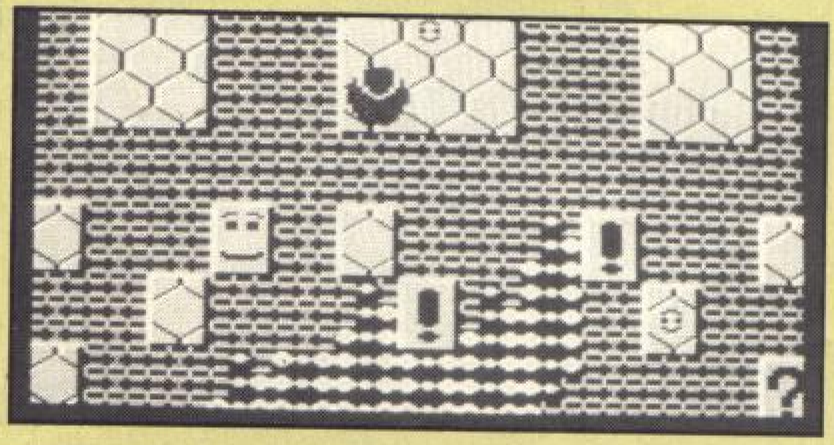
Ninja Hamster follows the adventures of a black-belted rodent as he returns from fields afar only to find his village in the grip of Sinister Rat and Lizard of Death – his two arch enemies. In a frenzy of martial arts, flying fur and gnashing incisors, Ninja hamster attempts to rid the village of the two evil creatures.

Traxxion is named after a giant city, currently under construction in space. As the driver of a monorail maintenance car, you're happily going about your business when things start to go wrong. The city begins to self-destruct, and escape entails negotiating the monorail system from one side of the city to the other, avoiding other vehicles on the rail, haywire gun emplacements and dangerous hotspots where the city's cooling system has broken down.



RE-BOUNDER

B-b-ber-doing! B-b-bounder b-b-bounces b-b-back in Gremlin's soon-to-be-released sequel Re-Bounder



THOSE *Bounder* holics who had just about been cured of their addiction are now due for a major relapse, thanks to Gremlin and the return of their binary bouncing ball, in *Re-Bounder* – the sequel. Designed along the same lines as its predecessor, *Re-Bounder* takes the intelligent tennis ball over 18 tortuous levels, each filled with aliens intent on your deflation.

Additional features include the ability to purchase designer armour-plating and extra firepower from hardware stores along the way. However, the game still promises to be as infuriating as the first, and you only have until June before your sanity comes under fire again!

June also sees the second of Gremlin's releases, *Alien Evolution*, a 3D perspective exploring and blasting game, set in Earth's distant future, after the all-too-inevitable nuclear holocaust.

Sheltering from the radioactive surface above, mankind has taken to living in subterranean dwellings. In the interim, an Alien species has taken up residence on the surface and when Man decides to reclaim his home, the new squatters are none too keen on moving out.

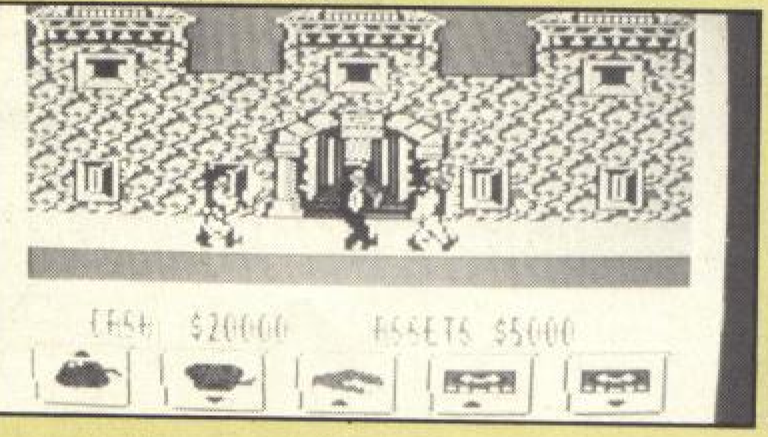
In an attempt to rid themselves of these unwanted freeloaders, the Terrans have completed what they hope is the answer: 'Cyborg 64' – half man, half machine, whose task it is to rid the Earth of the extra-terrestrial invasion.

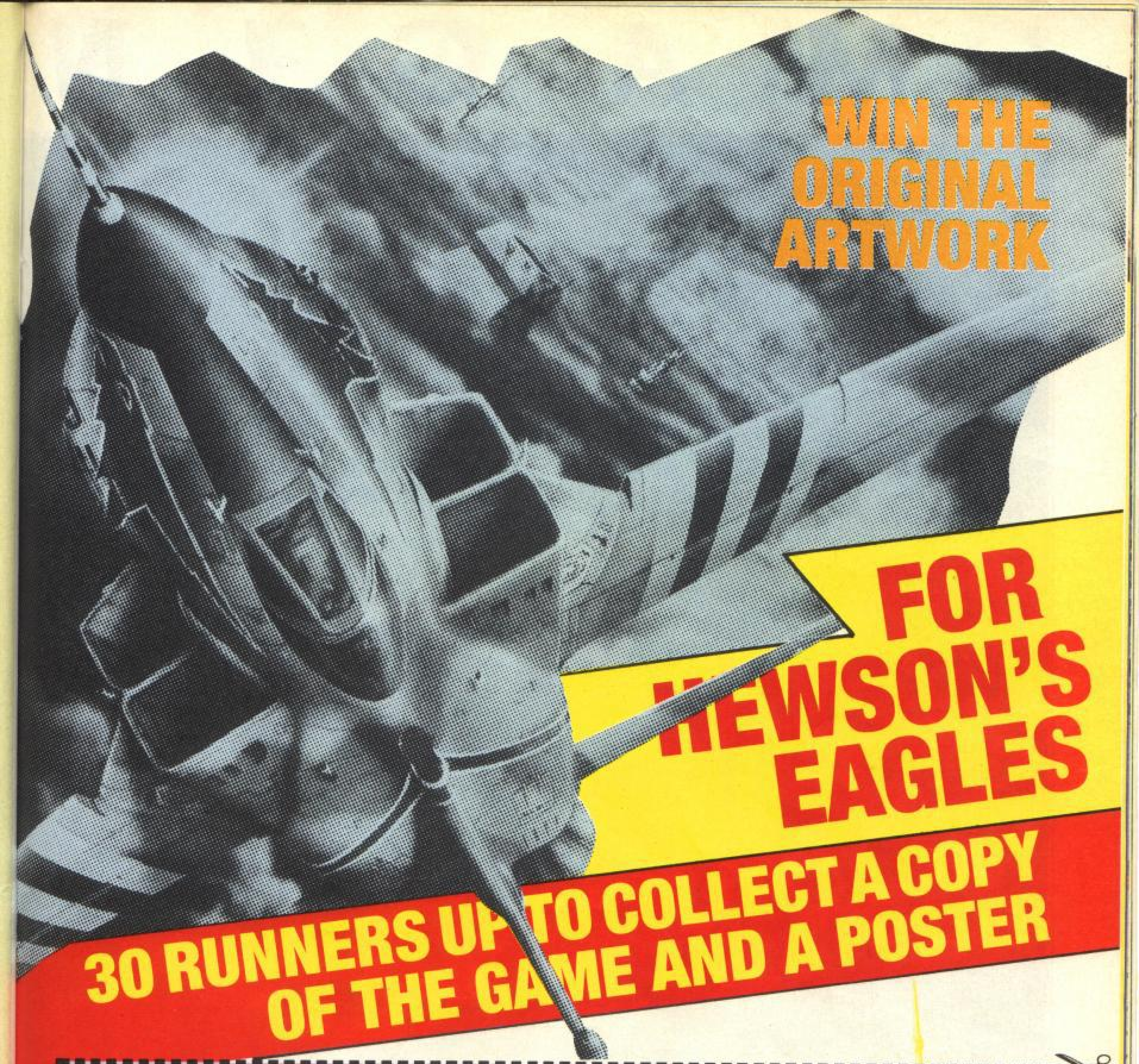
Unfortunately, the Alien species has posthumous regenerative abilities which means that each time they die, a new, smarter strain is unleashed from their remains! Only when the fifth and most terrible species has been destroyed can the Earth belong to Mankind once more.

Alien Evolution is released in June, so lie low until then.

OCEAN-GOING ADVENTURES

OCEAN's oriental mega-game, *Tai-Pan* (based on the eponymous James Clavell novel), is nearing completion, and just to whet your appetite.





WIN THE ORIGINAL ARTWORK

FOR HEWSON'S EAGLES

30 RUNNERS UP TO COLLECT A COPY OF THE GAME AND A POSTER

Eagles, Hewson's latest shoot 'em up puts you at the controls of an Eagle fighter – annihilating attacking aliens and collecting their Messenger Droids. Armed with your on-board cannon and a top secret Devestator device, you fight your way past deadly fireballs towards the deadly Zeta fighter – a computer controlled interceptor craft of awesome firepower.

Those nice people at Hewson have kindly donated the original artwork of the fabulous Eagles poster as a competition prize, and to win it all you have to do is find the following nine words in the wordsquare . . .

DEVESTATOR
DROIDS
EAGLES
FIGHTER
FIREBALLS
FLYING
HEWSON
MESSENGER
ZETA

NAME ____________

ADDRESS ____________

____

____

POSTCODE ____________

TELEPHONE ____________

Entries should arrive at EAGLES COMP, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10 LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1AQ no later than July 9th.

E	Y	D	R	D	H	E	G	M	Z	R	Y	U
D	S	A	F	R	E	G	N	E	S	S	E	M
J	T	X	Q	O	L	C	T	F	N	B	Y	Q
K	E	U	I	I	D	A	K	Z	O	U	R	X
T	J	D	P	D	E	J	Z	A	P	C	W	R
G	H	E	W	S	O	N	R	D	B	K	P	S
V	E	V	O	Y	E	V	I	F	T	A	X	T
B	L	E	Z	N	Q	A	L	I	O	R	L	U
S	L	S	S	M	F	Y	H	R	G	O	A	V
Z	O	T	U	K	I	Z	I	E	H	O	R	F
R	M	A	T	N	G	C	J	B	S	B	Z	H
E	U	T	G	K	H	J	P	A	R	A	G	A
T	M	O	L	L	T	Z	V	L	A	N	J	T
I	W	R	W	X	E	A	G	L	E	S	B	X
O	M	V	N	O	R	X	Q	S	B	A	W	D
P	H	A	H	A	G	L	Y	Z	C	I	A	E

I M A G I N



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Screen shots taken from various computer formats

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MANOEUVRES

With Philippa Irving



STRATEGIC PLACING

Hello, I'm Philippa Irving. I've been editing 'Frontline', the CRASH strategy column, since the beginning of the year, and now here I am at last to provide a similar service to you, the ZZAP!-reading strategy enthusiast. I'll be scrutinising, in my own uncompromising way, any software with the vaguest hint of strategy which wends its way from Ludlow to Oxford. I'll be giving the large number of wargamers who read the magazine (that's you!) a chance to air their views through the Despatches section, and perhaps (if the powers that be let me have enough room) I'll introduce a modest hints and tips column. All of this despite being in the final extremities of avoiding studying for an English degree at Oxford! I need the money, you see, to keep up the usual lifestyle – punting on the Cherwell, going to the Christchurch ball on a double dining ticket, rioting in restaurants and existing largely on strawberries, cream and vintage champagne.

My interests are many and varied, and include writing novels, singing, role-playing, media fandom, knitting and hi-fi. However, ever since my family got a Commodore for Christmas a few years ago, and particularly since I bought my own Spectrum, collecting, playing and studying 'entertainment software' has been a constant source of enjoyment and expenditure.

Because I'm still an enthusiastic and discriminating member of the software-buying public, I try to bring the perspective of a potential purchaser to my assessment of the games reviewed in this column. This is not always easy when I get the games free, and I can be surreptitiously grateful for a simplistic system that lets me get in and out quickly and off to a tutorial, but I keep in mind that the games I've valued most have been those which seemed at first to offer limitless hours of play, and yet were attainable in the end after many dedicated weeks. I think in particular of the great Spectrum arcade adventures such as *Marsport*, and the sheer sense of scope created by the artistry of the *Midnight* games. Lastable games create their own world, so atmosphere is just as important as complexity of detail, the difference between *Battlefield Germany* and *Vulcan* is like the difference between 'Sir Charles Grandison' and 'Clarissa'.

Although there's a degree of common ground between all entertainment software – it all, as a principal element offers the player interaction without the presence of another human being – I believe as a point of principal that some kinds of games should have specialised treatment. No reviewer would measure a text adventure by the same standards as an arcade game, yet it's not uncommon to find reviews treating a strategy or wargame as if it were a *Gauntlet* variety that didn't move fast enough. It's true that because of the comparitively small number of wargame releases, there are fewer opportunities for good games to surface from what is probably the inevitable mass of mediocrity – it's also true that production values are usually lower, especially when it comes to graphics and programming standards. There are some strategy and wargames which cannot be faulted on presentation and programming, but it's common to find a game of this genre seriously presented as a major release fresh from a BASIC compiler in somebody's back bedroom. Some people, fed up with the increasing blandness and crassness of modern releases, would welcome this as a return to Victorian values; there's still one area of computer gaming where content is valued more highly than presentation. Unfortunately, a badly-programmed game is more often than not just a bad game full stop. A lot can be done towards careful, attractive design without compromising the availability of memory, and nothing is less likely to create that essential, elusive quality 'atmosphere' than a few monochromatic blobs on a featureless screen.

The Commodore, with its disk facilities, offers a great deal more potential to the wargamer than the Spectrum. It also offers American imports at astronomical prices. I'll be trying to assess in this column how much these sort of games really offer, and I'll be giving what I like to think is a slightly alternative approach to computer games.

Serious hardware problems have delayed my arrival in ZZAP! and have truncated this months column. Hopefully I'll have it sorted out by next month . . . meanwhile, it's back to Wordsworth and Richardson.

BATTLE CRUISER

SSI, £19.99 disk only



This is a difficult game for me to review. Because of the great complexity of the rules I have to admit that in the short time that I've had to play-test, it hasn't been easy to get a comprehensive idea of how the system feels to play – although the rulebook gives an immediate understanding of the theory behind it. Getting the most from the gameplay is a matter of co-ordinating the uncompromising and unimaginative on-screen appearance with the material in the rulebook (which might more accurately be described as a source-book) and the realisation quickly sets in that this is a long-term project.

Battle Cruiser comes with the expected lavish packaging of an American import, which is reminiscent of a boxed scenario pack for a role playing game; the disk itself is inconspicuously hidden in a corner of the box underneath the glossy, full-sized, 29 page rule book. This is a standard of presentation hitherto unknown to me, coming wide-eyed from the homespun realms of Spectrum wargames, and the amount of material in the book promises the kind of complexity and thoroughness that only disk-based software can hope to offer. The game's subtitle – 'The Complete Simulation of World War I and World War II Surface Battles in the Atlantic' – seems mildly ambitious, but when you realise that the disk is double-sided, and that 14 full pages of the rulebook are given over to ship specification, the potential soon becomes apparent. Even a short examination of the permutations available on loading makes it clear that the range of historical or custom-built scenarios available is enormous

World War I is contained in its naval entirety on one side of the disk, and WWII on the other. The first screen allows the player to tailor a set of fundamental options such as the number of players (you can even watch the computer playing with itself if you wish, something I've never seen offered by a wargame before), handicap level for non-historical scenarios, and the speed at which system messages are displayed. An important choice offered is whether to play an historical scenario (of which there are four offered for each war) or to build your own.

Initially, building your own scenario is recommended. If you choose to, further options screens offer you the chance to fight on the open sea or to design your own landmass to play around; you can also specify the time and date of the conflict down to the minute, with the year chosen affecting the availability of ships. There is also a chance to introduce further handicap levels by deciding who has air/sea control of the battle area, who is best at damage control, and what the visibility level is. There are five different types of action offered, four game lengths, and a selection (in one case) of 53 different ships. Ploughing through these options before play is even in sight gives the confused first-time player a bewildering glimpse of infinity. Fortunately, the choices are methodically set out and explained in the rulebook, and only a player eager to get at the action would be confused. I suspect that this group includes most people who load a piece of software for the first time, but detailed reference to the rulebook is an essential practice at every stage in this game.

Eventually the game reaches the deployment phase which opens all player-designed scenarios, and which offers another chance to meddle with the variables. Ships can be auto-selected by the computer for both sides, or by the player from a pool of 'ship selection points' allocated to reflect the size and type of battle. In the deployment phase the player can freely alter the bearing, speed and characteristics of each ship, can change their division numbers, and can even rename them according to his own fantasy. Renaming ships is very useful if you have opted for the quick cop-out of letting the computer auto-select your forces, because it will probably serve you up with four Acastas and five Renowns and you may subsequently have difficulty in keeping track of individual ships.

The anticipation raised by the long series of option screens is very much dissipated by the first sight of action. The player is confronted by a blank screen with a pale square in the middle of it, and a crowded menu of options at the bottom. The game is driven by a number of these menus, which are called up when appropriate and, again, are fully and methodically explained in the rules; the gameplay's visual presentation, which occurs very much in terms of statistics, could kindly be called minimalist and more honestly uninspiring, even weedy. Ships are shown as indistinct shapes which just about hint at their type (and more or less indicate in which direction the vessel is pointing), though when both sides go into battle it's impossible to tell at a glance which are your own. Each class of ship is, however, illustrated in reasonable detail in the reference guide except where we are told, grandly, that 'historical reference is not available.' Imaginative input on the part of the player is required to get any pleasure from watching the game. This distinctly shoddy appearance, particularly when contrasted with the superior presentation of the rules, makes it look like *Battle Cruiser* is deliberately refusing to have anything to do with the cosmetics of computer game design. An austere utilitarian approach is all very business-like, especially when the important aspects of the game are so well worked out, but computer software has in theory the potential to be genuinely attractive; and as far as wargames go, the computer has to compete with the considerable aesthetic appeal of the boxed game and painted lead figures.

Play proceeds in a fast, free mixture of order giving and order execution. Through a system of menus, movement and combat instructions can be given to ships individually or en masse by divisions. The orders are then executed in real-time during the action phase, which indefinitely extends itself unless the player requests another order phase. If anything interesting happens during the action phase, the player is informed by messages which may flash by very rapidly or very slowly depending on which message speed was selected. To change the fleet's orders in response to these messages, the player presses a key to exit the action phase at the next opportunity – the response is not instantaneous, as the game seems to want to finish what it's doing first. This is a free-form system which releases the gameplay from the artificial rigidity of fixed-length turns, and gives the player a good degree of control. A save game option is automatically given before each orders phase.

Prior to combat, the player's fleet has to find the enemy ships. The map, which allows movement in all the compass directions by means of an extremely irritating cursor system, is not enormous in real terms and the enemy will probably be sighted within the first turn. As with movement, orders for combat can be given to entire divisions; and if an individual ship is set against one of the enemy, a 'target' order automatically starts the firing. Whether or not your ship will hit, or do much damage if it does, is determined by a vast number of factors. During the orders phase it's easy to access a table which shows the weaponry of each ship, and reference to the rulebook gives details about the range and merit of the equipment. When combat is happening during the action phase, a hit to either to one of the player's or the enemy's ships is reported in specific terms of eight possible locations, damage to which gradually impairs the ship's own capacity. There are lists of equations in the rules which explain the probable accuracy of gunfire and the chance of penetration – using variables such as the speed of the target, the range and the specifications of the weapons. I may not understand them, but I'm glad to see them; I feel that game mechanics ought to be explained in the rules, and *Battle Cruiser* does it in such exacting detail that one has the uneasy suspicion that the information ought to be useful if only one were clever



enough. Certainly the rules give the player the maximum possible chance of intelligently making use of the capabilities of each ship, even though in play it's easy just to target the first ship you spot and watch in fascination as hits to various parts of the anatomy are reported in quick succession. Hits are accompanied by a sound effect which is useful enough, but has no chance at all of generating the atmosphere the graphics deny.

Points are scored for sinking ships and driving them off the edge of the map. The number of points scored for ships lessens if the victorious side has air/sea control of the battlefield, so there is a price to be paid for favourable handicap conditions.

'Battle Cruiser' is an impressive concept, if nothing special as a piece of software; whether or not you will enjoy it depends very much on what you're looking for. The game in the computer seems almost a supplement to the rulebook, and it's clear that to get the best out of playing it you will need to refer constantly to the fascinating charts, descriptions and details presented in the manual. For someone who is interested in the technical aspects of naval warfare, this seems to be as complete a model as one could possibly want (though I admit I know nothing about it).

Together with the eight historical situations, the infinite choice of player-defined open sea combat and the option to custom-build maps, the potential variety of play is enormous and I rate sustaining interest as about as high a virtue as any game can have. It is usually a very difficult quality to judge for a review.

PRESENTATION 80%
The impeccable and expensive packaging is slightly offset by the unevenly poor-quality on-screen appearance.

GRAPHICS 39%
Uninteresting is a kind description.

RULES 96%
So luxuriant, so faultless, that they're more important than the game itself . . .

AUTHENTICITY 95%
Comes close to justifying its claim to be a 'complete' simulation.

PLAYABILITY 86%
Dry and puzzling to get into, but once there swift and well-designed.

VALUE 80%
Extremely expensive, but when you've paid you've got the whole Allied and Axis navies and hours of play. It's a question of perceived values.

OVERALL 89%
Excellent for what it is, but very much a matter of taste.



DESPATCHES

Unsurprisingly, my first month with ZZAP! has not seen a huge amount of correspondence. However, I was encouraged to receive one long and entertaining letter (printed below in somewhat abridged form), and I'm looking forward to hearing from many more of you – starting now! If you want ZZAP!'s strategy coverage to grow and be taken more seriously, support and active interest from everybody reading this is one of the most effective ways of establishing that wargaming is not just the province of an eccentric minority.

CONTROVERSIAL WARGAMING

Hi Philippa,
Here speaks one who approves the return of the ZZAP! strategy section, and the best of luck with it. Surely I can't be the only C64 owner who is getting a little fed up with the present stream of 'arcade adventure shoot 'em up platform problem solving' software. Some of these products may be 'state of the art', pushing the tired old machine to its limit, but what's happened to new ideas? Of course you reply 'what about *The Sentinel*, what about . . . 'er . . . I can't think of an another original recent example!

Anyway, I for one would rather play something different (that's been reasonably well implemented). Thus, for purely personal reasons, I would rather play a strategy game . . . on a *very* general level, I find that they contain more lastability, variety and challenge. Of course there are exceptions; the great social interaction provided by the Epyx sports simulations, the 'thinking-person's' arcade version of *Paradroid* (what an arrogant opinion, eh!), the pure mindless destruction of *Attack Of The Mutant Camels*, but these are exceptions. I don't think us old people are too well catered for – what! someone over 20 has dared to comment (believe it or not, I'm actually over 25!).

I have obtained many US games via import, principally through the efficient and knowledgeable services of Strategic Plus Software. Unfortunately the cost was prohibitive or I would have bought a majority of the SSI range already! Still, I knew enough to have decided what I wanted from their range, although it saddens me to see my money going US Gold's way. A small point – three of my five favourite SSI games were not bought by US Gold, these being *Rails West*, *Cartels* and *Cut-Throats* (business game) and *Imperium Galactum* (space empire game). Fortunately I already possess these games, though it's a shame they will not be appreciated by a wider playing public (an eight player all-night game of *Rails West* is wondrous to behold!).

I'd like to deal briefly with some strategic games. Firstly, *Vietnam* and why it was so highly rated – I don't know! I'm sorry to say that I didn't agree with a lot of ZZAP!'s 1986 awards (still, that's democracy for you!). I realise that you can't really compare a wargame with an arcade game, so I won't make any of those comparisons. You can compare like with like however, and my first criticism is that *Vietnam* is too much like the SSI games *Panzer Grenadier*, *Field of Fire* and even the *Wargame Construction Set*. It's even like the aged *Operation Whirlwind* (but incidentally received much higher review percentages than its ancient predecessor). In fact, at an overall 92% (*OW* got 76%) I would suggest that it was much overrated game. The markings and Sizzler award are questionable because it doesn't have an even vaguely unique game system (developed for the purpose of simulating the conflict in question), because it's not such a complicated game to learn, and because the system/game is not flexible (there are just set scenarios).

Undeniably, the Americans (and all other nationalities in the 'thousand day war') could not get to grips with the game systems, so they lost. No wargame could thus possibly simulate the innumerable problems faced – hence a authenticity rating of 94% must be doubtful. I cannot complain about presentation, graphics and instructions (except they are substantially greater that *OW*'s ratings, for what is a very similar game). As for the 'controversial' label, well, it's just silly. (Put about by US Gold to generate interest perhaps? No, I'm just getting paranoid). Wargames are controversial only in the way they treat non-fiction while arcade games are abstract. You may as well cite *The Little Computer People Discovery Kit* as an incitement for slavery and imprisonment. Even *Raid Over Moscow* was labelled controversial, presumably for mentioning Moscow. I think 'sensational' may be a more apt charge, or even non-authenticity, but controversial. Who labels WWII games as controversial? – my father fought in it and remembers it well. There is this 're-writing of history' charge about *Vietnam* that should be considered.

There does seem to be some popular ideal/movement, especially in America, about not facing up to Vietnam. 'Rambo' is the obvious example, but there's also the goody-goody Vietnam vets in 'The A-Team' who never kill anyone. Having dealt with the US armed forces in the past and for some time (for example during the Libyan bombing last year), I think there is *something* in the US character that I can't define as a Brit. Anyway, that's psychology, not wargaming. The point is that I don't believe any wargame simulation will show you, especially on a tactical level, why the conflict was won or lost (the idea of winning the battle and losing the war holds true), so it cannot be considered on that level . . .

Alan Rose, Ilford

These are edited highlights from a very much longer letter, written, Alan explains, very quickly. He also complains about the fact that a lot of wargames are suspiciously similar to each other. It's unsubtle to be dogmatic about what offends and doesn't offend in a wargame. Theoretically there's not difference at all between, for instance, the Falklands and WWII. It might be hypocritical to object to one and not the other. Relatives of people killed in recent wars are still alive, certainly, but I shouldn't imagine they buy or play the games in question! I have no particular moral standpoint about any of this, but I was certainly very disturbed by the advertisements for Vietnam.

PI



THE SCORELORD'S HIGH-SCORING HEROES

1942 (Elite)
1,115,200 J Ashbrook & G Warnock, Bradford, W Yorks
871,500 Martin Coyle, Clifton, Notts
754,300 James Whitworth, Oldham, Lancs

ACE (Cascade)
100,000 Andrew Welch, Stevenage, Herts
83,380 M Horsey, Waltham Abbey, Kent
42,550 Mark Jeffery, Dianella, W Australia

ALIENS (Electric Dreams)
126,500 Paul Griffiths, Llandudno, N Wales
10,240 Stacey King, Goffs Oak, Herts
10,220 Gary Smith, Dersingham, Norfolk

ALLEYKAT (Hewson)
9,334,400 Richard Hudson, Copmanthorpe, York
7,712,050 Jason Birnie, Cranleigh, Surrey
7,612,900 Jonathon Webb, Highbridge, Somerset

ANTIRIAD (Palace Software)
Completed in . . .
3:06 M Gooday, Bishop's Stortford, Herts
3:40 Damian Boocock, Colne, Lancs
3:52 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks

ARKANOID (Imagine)
1,262,190 Jonathon Webb, Highbridge, Somerset
793,110 Paul Fisher, Peterborough, Cambs
779,250 Jason Ward, Bradford-on-Avon, Wilts

ARMOURDILLO (Code Masters)
11,300 Adie griffiths, Crowborough, E Sussex

AUF WIEDERSEHEN MONTY (Gremlin Graphics)
15,950 Graham Millie, East Harnham, Wilts
12,427 Casey Gallacher, Reading, Berks
6,374 Russel Millie, East Harnham, Wilts

BARBARIAN (Palace Software)
12,100 Ciaran Brennan, ZZAP! Towers

BEAMRIDER (Activision)
980,420 Steve Jarratt, ZZAP! Towers
272,174 Steve Tye, Kidderminster, Worcs

BOMBJACK (Elite)
4,052,870 Jez Foy, Tring, Herts
3,264,600 Wayne Winter, Lawrence Weston, Bristol
1,384,130 Casey Gallacher, Reading, Berks

BOMBJACK II (Elite)
2,408,900 Lee Gregory, Chesterfield, Derbyshire
1,243,400 Paul Wheatley, S Norwood, London
483,200 Mark Hemsworth, Chesterfield, Derbyshire

BREAKTHRU (US Gold)
246,000 Vincent Old, Wellingborough, Northants
138,050 Paul Gibson, Sunderland, Tyne And Wear
111,900 Gary Rice, Colchester, Essex

BULLDOG (Gremlin Graphics)
1,109,500 Casey Gallacher, Calcot, Reading
1,108,900 Brett Warburton, Hollingworth, Cheshire
937,000 Trygue Andersen, Fauske, Norway

CAULDRON II (Palace Software)
1,508,550 Cliff Nobresa, St Helier, Jersey
153,750 John Reynolds, Duxford, Cambridge
132,400 Shaun Russell, Shildon, Co Durham

COBRA (Ocean)
285,900 Philip Stevens, Alfreton, Derbyshire
93,400 Patrick Green, Burnley, Lancs
89,200 Stephen Wildridge, Great Sutton, S Wirral

CRYSTAL CASTLES (US Gold)
677,992 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
668,995 Richard Hardbattle, Nuneaton, Warks
648,200 Nigel Leather, Northwich, Cheshire

DAN DARE (Virgin)
7,423 Sankar Sahdevan, London E12
7,397 Scott Fulfitt, Endover, Devon
7,297 Shaun Alcock, Tyldesley, Manchester

DECATHLON (Firebird)
9,840 Howard Worton, Southwark, London

DELTA (Thalamus)
1,258,430 Colin Redfern, Heywood, Lancs
895,850 Aidon Donnelley, Kilmacud, Dublin
371,220 Jonathan Wood, Edgeware, Middx

DRAGON'S LAIR (Software Projects)
63,997 Sean Walker (Runsoft), Melbourne, Australia
35,410 Martin Coyle, Clifton, Notts
33,750 Simon Cole, Chelmsford, Essex

DUET (Elite)
113,520 Paul Molyneux, Doncaster, S Yorks

ENCOUNTER (Novagen)
1,888,000 Anon, Crewe, Cheshire
1,488,900 Kenneth Shewry, Cramlington, N Humbs
1,135,500 Stephen Blidgeon, Wythenshawe, Manchester

ENDURO RACER (Activision)
2,227,475 Dale Somerset, Wadsley Bridge, Sheffield
1,299,832 Howard Worton, Southwark, London

ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE (Software Projects)
78,538 Howard Clarke, Inverness, Scotland
70,401 Theo Alexander, Sidcup, Kent
57,829 Jamie Paton, Downfield, Dundee

EXPRESS RAIDER (US Gold)
68,450 gavin Shute, Aylesbury, Bucks

THE EQUALISER (The Power House)
9,270 Graeme Crichton, Irvine, Ayrshire

FEUD (Bulldog)
44% Richard Morgan, Fordingbridge, Hampshire

FIRELORD (Hewson)
143,160 Daniel Osbourne, Hornsea, N Humbs
116,805 Damian Ward, Harrogate, W Yorks
50,290 Howard Worton, London

FIRETRACK (Electric Dreams)
664,960 Kristian Bruun, Copenhagen, Denmark
527,290 Johnny Larsen, Copenhagen, Denmark

FIST II (Melbourne House)
1,753,000 Steven Rolf, Kettering, Northants
1,560,800 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
1,220,000 Steven Guilfoyle, Oldham

FIST II TOURNAMENT (Melbourne House)
7,506,000 Shahjahan Alhassan, Slough, Berks
6,012,300 Steven Rolf, Kettering, Nothants
5,096,000 Kevin Lennard, St Helier, Sark

FLOYD THE DROID (Ariolasoft)
11,830 Sean Walker, (Runsoft), Australia
7,970 Matthew Williams, Yeovil, Somerset
6,040 Sam Shields, Canterbury, Kent

FUTURE KNIGHT (Gremlin Graphics)
109,800 Billy Watson, Cardiff
96,400 Michael Pihl, Kumla, Sweden
72,500 D A Ashcroft, New Brighton, Wirral

GALIVAN (Imagine)
287,000 Chris McLean, Helsby, Cheshire

GAUNTLET (US Gold)
Merlin The Wizard
7,541,404 Graeme Smith, Little Stoke, Bristol
6,581,019 Andrew Cooper, Sedgley, W Mids
5,200,100 John Coe, Sheffield

Questor The Elf
6,850,250 John Coe, Sheffield
4,289,710 Andrew Cooper, Sedgley, W Mids
2,588,566 Casey Gallacher, Calcot, Reading

Thor The Warrior
7,376,198 Andrew Cooper, Sedgley, W Mids
3,625,130 John Coe, Sheffield
3,220,077 John Reynolds, Duxford, Cambs

Thyra The Valkyrie
3,872,019 Andrew Cooper, Sedgley, W Mids
2,352,500 John Coe, Sheffield
1,920,013 Daniel Osbourne, Hornsea, N Humbs

GAUNTLET: DEEPER DUNGEONS (US Gold)
Merlin The Wizard
1,611,473 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks

Thor The Warrior
4,678,932 David Taylor, Alvington, Glos
2,999,320 Richard Hardbattle, Nuneaton, Warks
2,549,386 Stephen Handley, Stapleford, Notts

GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS (Elite)
531,890 Christian Major, Norwich, Norfolk
242,000 Stuart Galloway, Yardley Wood, Birmingham
203,900 Gavin Fraser, Cradlehall, Inverness

GREEN BERET (Imagine)
1,301,850 Mark Cunningham, Newtown Abbey, Co Antrim
1,204,150 Paul Wheatley, S Norwood, London
1,059,890 Simon Cole, Chelmsford, Essex

GRIBBLY'S DAY OUT (Hewson)
64,879 Ryan Kelly, Glasgow
62,899 Peter Evans, Cardigan, Dyfed
22,349 Gordon Shearer, Rothes, Scotland

GUNSHIP (Microprose)
278,785 Richard Mellor, Bridgwater, Somerset
265,990 David Nicol, Heworth, York
124,660 Donna Nicol, Heworth, York

HACKER II (Activision)
Completed in . . .
15 mins Steven Bodey, Perth, Australia

HERCULES (Alpha/Omega)
815,920 Nils-Olav Barvag, 6770 Nordfjordeid, Norway
755,500 Robert Hemphill, Port Glasgow
560,910 G Béddows, Rugeley, Staffs

INTERNATIONAL KARATE (System 3)
382,250 Steven Bodey, Perth, Australia
336,750 Peter Hunt, Hook, Hants
335,220 F Lapp, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

INTO THE EAGLE'S NEST (Pandora)
628,700 Adam Taylor, Sutton Coldfield, W Mids
380,800 Dean Martin, Forest Gate, London
233,800 Dave Breed, Cullercoats, Tyne & Wear

IRIDIS ALPHA (Llamasoft)
349,520 Colin Redfern, Heywood, Lancs
193,260 Jonathan Wood, Edgeware, Middx
141,050 C Gorham, Braintree, Essex

JAILBREAK (Konami)
195,500 Paul Gibson, Sunderland, Tyne And Wear
102,500 Malcolm Redfern, Preston, Lancs
85,500 Marc Hodge, Selby, N Yorks

JEEP COMMAND (Bug Byte)
303,990 J Gheorghisor (Runsoft), Melbourne, Australia
250,350 Dave Breed, Cullercoats, Tyne & Wear
227,380 Marc Hodge, Selby, N Yorks

KNIGHT GAMES (English Software)
TOTAL:
68,355 Hassan Mussad, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
66,345 Simon Wilcox, Ipswich, Suffolk
66,200 Alan Scott, Peckham, London

KNUCKLEBUSTERS (Melbourne House)
11,700 Craig Bent, Failsworth, Manchester
6,300 Steve Quinnell, New Eltham, London
4,900 Theo Williams, London N4



KORONIS RIFT (Activision)
134,960 Stephen Mason, Stevenage, Herts
128,780 Mark Tortolano, Stirling, Scotland
96,430 Colin Burroughs, Ipswich, Suffolk

KRAKOUT (Gremlin Graphics)
12,740,800 Dave & Brett Warburton, Cheshire
3,068,500 Steven Packer, Chelmsford, Essex
2,125,940 Colin Redfern, Heywood, Lancs

KUNG-FU MASTER (US Gold)
4,385,990 Stephen Pennel, Fordingbridge, Hants
3,802,983 Andrew Dallyn, Braughton, Devon
1,519,446 Henry Gibney, London N7

LAW OF THE WEST (US Gold)
9,650 Svein Kierstad, 6017 Asetranda, Norway
7,937 Lee Smith, Billingham, Cleveland
7,694 Sean Walker (Runsoft), Melbourne, Australia

LEADER BOARD (US Gold/Access)
NOVICE
-25 Julian Smith, Halesowen, West Mids
-25 Christopher Lamb, Liverpool
-25 Paul Barnett, Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire

AMATEUR
-27 Jonathon Webb, Highbridge, Somerset
-23 Paul Allan, Aberdeen
-23 G McKenzie, Dunbar, E Lothian

PROFESSIONAL
-24 Paul Allan, Aberdeen
-22 Robin Evans, Tring, Herts
-22 Stewart Rogers, Tunbridge Wells, Kent

LEADERBOARD: EXECUTIVE EDITION (US Gold/Access)
NOVICE
-21 Stuart MacKissack, Knightswood, Glasgow

PROFESSIONAL
-18 Stewart Rogers, Tunbridge Wells, Kent

LIGHTFORCE (FTL)
2,296,360 Taki Liberopoulos, Athens, Greece
2,259,700 Stephen Ross, Ryde, Isle of Wight
1,400,200 J Ashbrook & G Warnock, Bradford, W Yorks

MARIO BROTHERS (Ocean)
252,620 Ozz, New Eltham, London

MERCENARY: THE SECOND CITY (Novagen)
7,942,196cr Russell Wallace, Dunoughaire, Co Dublin
7,442,000cr Brian Mainwaring, Talke Pits, Staffs
5,932,235cr Richard Hardbattle, Nuneaton, Warks

MISSION AD (Odin)
59,455 Mark Craft, Bearwood, Bournemouth
48,670 David Barker, Feltham, Middx
36,475 Jez Foy, Tring, Herts

MONTEZUMA'S REVENGE (Databyte)
398,450 Ozz, New Eltham, London
374,300 Lucy Kaupe, Streatham, London
363,650 Jennifer Yates, Bolton, Lancs

MUTANTS (Ocean)
26,460,850 Gavin Richardson, Swinton, Manchester
26,132,150 Jonathan West, Halifax, W Yorks
23,788,900 Bob Amaden, Gerrards Cross, Bucks

NEMESIS (Konami)
11,241,100 Stephen Ross, Ryde, Isle of Wight
7,703,600 D Birch & B Dignigg, Friskney, Lincs
2,927,900 Alan Sommerville, Dundee, Scotland

NEMESIS THE WARLOCK (Martech)
7,600 Gavin Shute, Aylesbury, Bucks
4,540 Dale Somerset, Wadsley Bridge, Sheffield

NINJA MASTER (Mastertronic)
485,840 Gordon Shearer, Rothes, Morayshire
198,880 Robert Futter, Downham Market, Norfolk
196,315 Michael Pihl, Kumla, Sweden

NOMAD (Ocean)
5,264 John Gheorghisor, (Runsoft), Australia
4,065 Paul Want, Harrogate, N Yorks
3,885 Paul Tudor, Stourbridge, Pedmore

NUCLEAR EMBARGO (Micropool)
31,810 Paul James, Nailsea, Bristol

OLLI AND LISSA (Firebird)
19,820 Lee Barker, Northwich, Cheshire
10,000 Damian Boocock, Colne, Lancs
7,953 Mick Wall, Hillsborough, Sheffield

PANTHER (Mastertronic)
215,500 Jason Birnie, Cranleigh, Surrey
200,940 Steve Lee, Guildford, Surrey
57,440 Justin Swords, Coventry

PAPERBOY (Elite)
301,400 Mark Rolf, Kettering, Northants
300,700 John White, Whitefield, Manchester
140,700 Steve Quinnell, New Eltham, London

PARADROID (Hewson)
364,290 Shazad Iqbal, Bury, Lancs
300,850 Gavin Burnett, Westhill, Inverness
297,190 Nick Riban, Dunbar, E Lothian

PARADROID PLUS (Hewson)
86,500 Brian Yeo, Tarbolton, Ayrshire
63,200 Adam Beabies, Tarbolton, Ayrshire
11,700 Richard Morgan, Fordingbridge, Hampshire

PARALLAX (Ocean)
106,850 Ali Kerswell, Guildford, Surrey
89,300 Jason Birnie, Cranleigh, Surrey
78,400 Adam Pracy, Newton Flotman, Norwich

PARK PATROL (Firebird)
994,990 Simon Jones, Chelmsford, Essex
993,130 Paul Harwood, Penge, London
991,570 Andrew McMinn, Colchester, Essex

PHANTOMS OF THE ASTEROID (Mastertronic)
561,412 M A Grist, Reading, Berks
334,054 Steve Lee, Guildford, Surrey
286,064 Chris Napier, Long Marston, Herts

PING PONG (Imagine)
62,200 Graeme Dutch, Tillydrone, Aberdeen
57,040 Barrie Hallett, Lawrence Weston, Bristol
51,300 Anoosh Lachin, London W13

POD (Mastertronic)
868,000 Damian Boocock, Colne, Lancs
788,910 Margaret Shevlin, Balby, Doncaster
750,540 Bryn Monk, Oswestry, Shropshire

PSYCASTRIA (Audiogenic)
4,249,600 M Gooday, Bishop's Stortford, Herts

RAGING BEAST (Firebird)
131,906 Mark Gunningham, Newtown Abbey, Co Antrim
104,374 Paul Ellis, Barnehurst, Kent
67,092 Matthew Minshull, Great Barr, Birmingham

RAMBO (Ocean)
12,198,800 Anon, Newry, County Down
8,154,600 Bryn Monk, Oswestry, Shropshire
8,001,200 Gavin Burnett, Westhill, Inverness

RANARAMA (Hewson)
3,358,400 Richard Leadbetter, Witham, Essex
1,135,000 Conor McGarrian, Dublin, Eire
615,700 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers

RIVER RAID (Firebird)
259,235 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers

ROCK 'N' WRESTLE (Melbourne House)
3,125,100 Jamie Orridge, Gedling, Nottingham
2,655,200 Alan Smith, Glenrothers, Fife
941,300 Graeme Dutch, Tillydrone, Aberdeen

SABOTEUR (Durell)
£1,175,000 Daniel Maurice, Redland, Bristol
£971,300 Jari Jaakola, Inkeroinen, Finland
£861,700 Gareth Mitchell, Mirfield, W Yorks
£395,000 Ged & Jim, Huddersfield, W Yorks

SANXION (Thalamus)
1,006,466 Steven Malpass, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs
784,390 Stephen Gandy, Halesowen, W Mids
517,860 Peter Williams, Preston, Lancs

SCARABAEUS (Ariolasoft)
277,824 Robert Berry, Fleetwood, Lancs
273,744 Douglas Clark, Carstairs Junction, Lanark
256,128 Luis Troyano, Stockport, Cheshire

SCOOBY DOO (Elite)
248,600 Sean McDonagh, Jarrow, Tyne & Wear
194,550 Gareth Mackie, Peterhead, Aberdeenshire
82,800 Michael Eley, Wimbourne, Dorset

THE SENTINEL (Firebird)
(Levels Jumped)
47 Ian Robinson, Totenham, London
47 Gary Penn, ZZAP! Towers
39 Ian Collier, Stockwood, Bristol

SHAO-LIN'S ROAD (The Edge)
128,420 Damian Boocock, Colne, Lancs
31,430 Howard Worton, London

SHOCKWAY RIDER (FTL)
1,524,798 Matthew Phypers, Sunnyhill, Derby
291,000 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
54,750 Howard Worton, Southwark, London

SILENT SERVICE (US Gold/Microprose)
(TONS SUNK)
910,100 Karsten Tokisuig, Drosselvej 6, Denmark
563,100 Steven Hall, Croughton, N Hants
763,200 Howard Clarke, Inverness, Scotland

SKATE ROCK (Bubble Bus)
239,020 Sean Walker, (Runsoft), Australia
223,280 Stephen Bloor, Nuneaton, Warks
101,900 M Murray, Wakefield, W Yorks

SKY RUNNER (Cascade)
$669,700 John Doyle, Kilmarnoch, Ayrshire
$190,600 Martin Dobson, London E12
$125,500 Peter Hulme, Bishop's Stortford, Herts

SKOOL DAZE (Micromega)
126,910 Anthony Duiker (Runsoft), Melbourne, Australia
120,780 Gordon Shearer, Rothes, Morayshire
104,340 Scott Moore, Fixby, Huddersfield

SLAMBALL (Americana)
5,768,870 Carelton Shaw, London, N10
5,504,870 Gavin Burnett, Westhill, Inverness
4,684,710 Martin Dalton, Rochester, Kent

SPACE HARRIER (Elite)
6,976,540 Dave Smith, Exeter, Devon
4,263,900 J Ashbrook & G Warnock, Bradford, W Yorks
3,177,500 Casey Gallacher, Calcot, Reading

SPLIT PERSONALITIES (Domark)
680,400 Mrs L Hayden, London E16
665,200 Mrs J Carroll, Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset
505,100 Michael Skelcher, Wentoning, Beds

STAR GLIDER (Rainbird)
110,725 Brian Mainwaring, Talke Pits, Staffs
46,325 Damian Ward, Harrogate, W Yorks
36,305 Phillip Clelland, Whitchurch, Avon

STARQUAKE (Bubble Bus)
287,763 Nigel Froud, Godalming, Surrey
287,140 Ove Knudseu, 5033 Fyllingsdaleu, Norway
273,667 Per Kjellander, Stenungsund, Sweden

STREET SURFER (Bubble Bus)
21,108 Jonathan Stock, Denton, Northampton
16,270 Howard Clarke, Inverness, Scotland
15,811 Adie Griffiths, Crowborough, E Sussex

SUPER CYCLE (US Gold/Epyx)
700,400 Declan Quinn, Bessbrook, Newry Co Down
320,160 A Verhaeghe, Bletchley, Bucks
269,310 Andy Girvan, Corby, Northants

TAU CETI (CRL)
21,055 Andrew Tarski, Dursley, Glos
20,465 Robert Elliot, Middlesbrough, Cleveland
20,440 Shaun Russell, Shildon, Co Durham

TENTH FRAME (US Gold/Access)
Amateur
269 Andrew Dodd, Normanton, Derby
268 Vincent Cox, Wellingborough, N Hants
266 Graeme Dutch, Tillydrone, Aberdeen

Professional
233 Neil Taylor, Bracknell, Berks
214 Graeme Dutch, Tillydrone, Aberdeen
202 Graham Millie, East Harnham, Wilts

TERRA CRESTA (Imagine)
402,100 Michael Dunajew, Adelaide, Australia
371,800 Robert Hemphill, Port Glasgow, Renfrewshire
341,000 Marc Hodge, Selby, N Yorks

THAI BOXING (Anco)
17,020 Dave Smith, Exeter, Devon

THRUST (Firebird)
3,500,800 Declan Quinn, Bessbrook, Newry Co Down
3,670,700 Anon, Newry, County Down
2,108,800 William Rodgers, Bessbrook, Newry Co Down

TOY BIZARRE (Activision)
223,420 J D Oliver, Ipswich, Suffolk
144,700 Sherif Salama, Cairo, Egypt
102,900 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers

TRAILBLAZER (Gremlin Graphics)
1,123,350 Jason Cooper, Wednesbury, W Mids
1,120,040 Henry Rawlinson, Salisbury, Wilts
828,270 Ian Robinson, Tottenham, London

TRAP (Alligata)
481,900 Lawry Simm, Liverpool L23
429,510 Colin Bayne, Glenrothes, Fife
328,500 Robert Elliot, Middlesborough, Cleveland

UCHI MATA (Martech)
378,760 Mark Sexton, Lancing, W Sussex
353,795 Nicholas Lester, Dudley, W Mids
326,655 D Simmons, Wythenshawe, Manchester

URIDIUM (Hewson)
22,906,385 CN, SP, MD, JK, Marston Green, Birmingham
3,820,020 David Horsburgh, Uddington, Glasgow
3,428,985 Andrew Mackay, Liverpool 18

URIDIUM PLUS (Hewson)
197,925 Russell Wallace, Co Dublin, Ireland
175,405 Paul Wheatley, S Norwood, London
167,000 Damian Boocock, Colne, Lancs

V (Ocean)
28,600 Peter Williams, Preston, Lancs
24,600 D A Ashcroft, Wirral, Cheshire
23,400 Paul Evans, Redruth, Cornwall

WARHAWK (Firebird)
3,322,648 Jamie Orridge, Gedling, Nottingham
3,172,288 Peter Hunt, Hook, Hants
1,801,611 Bryan Chamberlain, Norwich, Norfolk

WAR (Martech)
426,144 Casey Gallacher, Calcot, Reading
270,782 Ricky Smith, Basingstoke, Hants
153,968 Steve Lee, Guildford, Surrey

WEST BANK (Gremlin Graphics)
131,600 James Lavelle, Copmanthorpe, York
115,530 Marc Hodge, Selby, N Yorks
87,030 Lee Ellershaw, Blackpool, Lancs

WIZARD'S LAIR (Bubble Bus)
152,735 Steven Medcraft, Rayleigh, Essex
127,935 Paul Peterson, Harlow, Essex
123,925 Robert Keating, Aigburth, Liverpool

XEVIOUS (US Gold)
281,280 Jonathon Webb, Highbridge, Somerset
196,270 Fintan Brady, Virginia, Ireland
173,860 John McGruther, Bishopton, Scotland

YIE AR KUNG-FU (Imagine)
154,200 Andrew Manley, Bush Hill Park, Enfield
152,260,000 Scott Gracen, Whitley Bay, Tyne And Wear
127,900 Mick Wall, Hillsborough, Sheffield

YIE AR KUNG-FU II (Imagine)
288,300 Carl Adams, Tooting, London
183,300 Ian Coulter, Leeds
134,400 Rene Groenewoud, Heerhugowaard, The Netherlands

Z (Rhino)
701,250 Howard Clarke, Inverness, Scotland
671,450 Jake E, Hill Top, West Brom
576,200 Stephen Ross, Ryde, Isle of Wight

ZOLYX (Firebird)
157,163 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
81,902 Ciaran Brennan ZZAP! Towers
75,283 A Dyctif, Ludlow, Shropshire

ZONE RANGER (Firebird)
12,904 Mrs Sue McGovern, Leighton Buzzard, Beds
10,720 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
8190 Sherif Salama, Cairo, Egypt

DESIGN A SHADOWY MINION

WIN! A set of Hand Painted Citadel Miniatures



PLUS! A copy of Shadows Of Mordor from Melbourne House

WITH 50 copies of the game for the runners up

THIS is a particularly cruel life – especially if you're a Competitions Minion. So, to escape from the trials and troubles of everyday life, I like nothing better than to hide in my wardrobe and read a good fantasy novel. And what better than one of Tolkien's famous Middle Earth series to take my mind on a free flight of imagination.

One problem is that the Spiky Haired Ones keep stealing my light bulb, and when that happens I can't read any more – sob! Luckily, the clever programmers at Melbourne House have converted some of Tolkien's best books to computer games, so I can sit happily in the dark and play all day.

The latest of these games is *Shadows Of Mordor*, based on The Dark Towers (the second book in the Lord Of The Rings trilogy). This really inspires my imagination, and I can just see myself running free across Middle Earth, fighting off the Spiky Haired Ones (and their new baldy accomplices – the Shiny Headed Ones, Brennan and Jarratt) and living a life of luxury among the Hobbits and Orcs.

But wait a minute. What if I had my own special minion – a creature that could do battle with the ZZAP! lads leaving me free to while away the hours! This is where you can help. Just design a minion's minion and you could win a boxed set of hand-painted Citadel miniatures and a copy of *Shadows Of Mordor*, courtesy of Melbourne House. Your minion can be animal, human (vegetable?) or a bit of both – but no robots please!

Design your minion on a sheet of A4 paper (the same size as this magazine page), and send it post haste (along with the name and address form at the bottom of the page) to:

SHADOWY MINION COMPETITION, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB. Entries should be received no later than the 9th of July 1987.

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

....

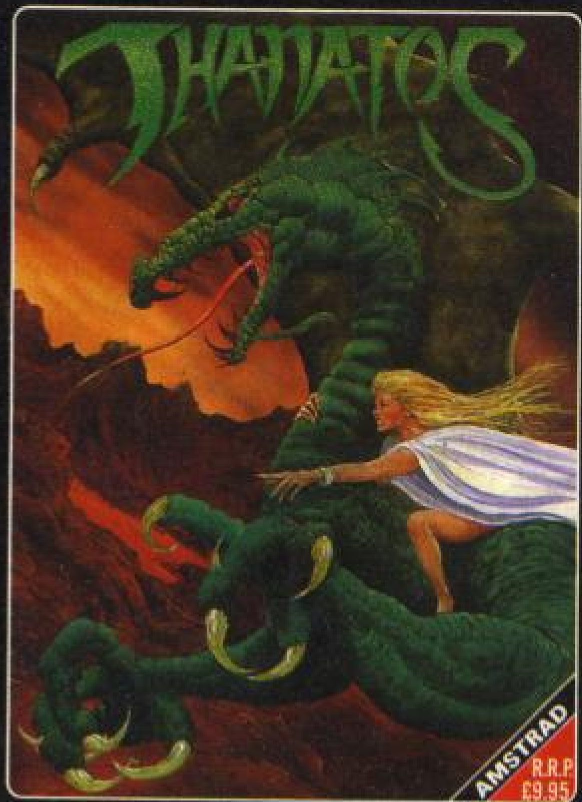
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THANATOS

In this magical game you take control of a dragon, Thanatos the destroyer, whose eternal destiny lies in conflict with the forces of the underworld. The dragon which is very large and superbly animated, flies, walks, swims, and burns its way through the landscape. The game features fantastic landscapes with a totally new panoramic scrolling action.

"Wow! This game is really amazing; stunning, astounding, brilliant! The tune on the title screen is very nice, but the graphics are absolutely superb." CRASH, December 1986 (overall rating 93%)

£9.95 Spectrum cassette
£9.95 Amstrad cassette, £11.95 Amstrad disk (£9.95 by mail order)
£7.95 Commodore 64 cassette, £9.95 Commodore 64 disk





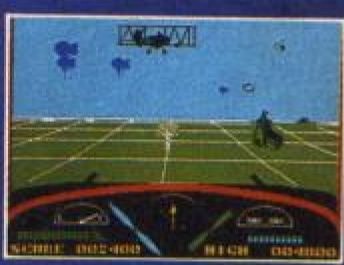


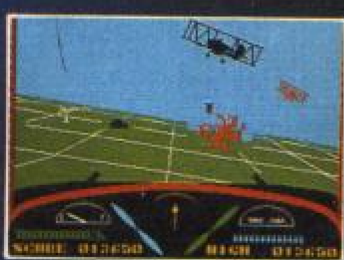
DEEP STRIKE

At last an opportunity to try your luck against the Red Baron and his flying circus of World War I flying aces. This game not only lets you take-off in a fully armed fighter, but also gives you control of the four bombers of your DEEP STRIKE attack force. It uses the latest techniques to bring you a smooth-scrolling and tilting 3D landscape viewed from the cockpit in full colour.

"...after a few games I really got into it. The way you can bomb the ground features (especially churches) makes the game much more enjoyable than if you just had to shoot planes/Overall a game that you should come back to quite a lot in the future." AMTIX, February 1987 (overall rating 71%)

£9.95 Spectrum cassette
£9.95 Amstrad cassette, £11.95 Amstrad disk (£9.95 by mail order)
£7.95 Commodore 64 cassette, £9.95 Commodore 64 disk





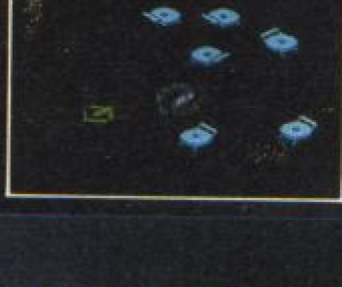


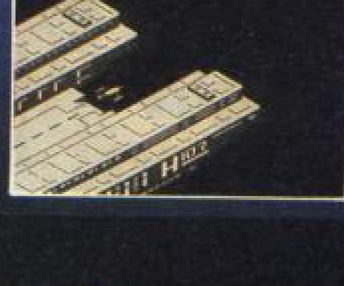
SIGMA SEVEN

An all-action arcade game featuring imaginative state-of-the-art 3D graphics and exciting synthesised sound. There are seven increasingly more difficult stages to the game which starts-out easy but ends-up almost impossible. Each stage is split into three phases : first take a space-fighter and blast your way to the next station through swarm-mine defences, then free that station's internal pathways of killer-robots and radioactive deposits, to finally reach the remote-controlled main panel which must be reset within a critical few seconds.

"I really like this – it has three neat mini-games all of which are very playable and addictiveThe graphics are really crisp and clear with a beautiful starry backdrop..." ZZAPP, February 1987 (overall rating 70%)

£7.95 Spectrum cassette
£7.95 Amstrad cassette, £11.95 Amstrad disk (£9.95 by mail order)
£9.95 Commodore 64 cassette, £9.95 Commodore 64 disk





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ENDURO RACER

Activision, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick or keys

Activision's first arcade conversion attempts to bring the power and thrills of high speed motorcycle racing into your living room. The action involves a series of motorcycle races contested over five courses, each accompanied by its own background landscape. The objective is simple; to successfully complete all the levels within the allotted time limit.

The biker is viewed in vanishing point perspective, from a position behind and slightly above his back. He's generally centred in the screen, while the track scrolls sideways as necessary to suggest curves, and the distant landscape follows suit. Activision have also attempted to incorporate bumps and hills (similar to those which appeared in the arcade game) over which the bike must wheelie – leaping into the air as it traverses the hazard.

The first course is set on a tree-lined country road. There's a handful of competitors to contend with, and a few jumps, or wheelies, to be executed.

A timer is set to 60 seconds at the beginning of each race, the limit within which the course must be completed – the actual time taken to complete a course is displayed at the end of each circuit. Opponent racers pose a threat, as collision between bikes slows you down and loses valuable time.

The second track, set in a desert, is made even more treacherous by the addition of rocks in the middle of the road, the third has puddles of water across the track, and the two final courses become harder and meaner versions of the second.



I'm so disappointed. I was looking forward to this as being the arcade tie-in of the year, but instead it's the greatest flop. Enduro Racer **contains none of the sparkle and realism of its arcade predecessor, the main flaws being the crudely animated graphics and unresponsive controls. The title tune is above average, but does nothing to cover up the atrocious playability.**



How Activision have got the bare-faced cheek to call this abomination Enduro Racer **is completely beyond my comprehension. A sickening travesty this might be, but a conversion of the thrilling off-road racing that I've often played in the arcades it ain't. Remove the official licence and you're left with most appalling race game that has been released in years. The bikes are completely devoid of animation, just single frame sprites which flicker and float about the lower portion of the screen, not even looking as if they're travelling along the road. The scrolling is incredibly poor, and the update on the 3D is juddery and slow. There's no feeling of speed – the difference between 10 and 200 kph is non-existent and the overall 3D effect is pathetic. The bike is incredibly sluggish to control and sometimes travels through rocks and objects as if they weren't there. Then, all of a sudden, the program decides that it's made a mistake and rectifies the situation by toppling the bike when it's nowhere near an object. By the way, what's happened to the jeeps on level two and why are the colour schemes different from those of the original? Why are there misleading quotes on the packaging, when all of them are referring to the Spectrum version? The final kick in the teeth is that the game is amazingly easy to complete, taking about half an hour to gain enough proficiency to win the race. I would not consider buying this under any circumstances, as the only similarity between this and its arcade counterpart is the name.**



▲ **Heading towards an obstacle at speed – prepare to jump . . .**



Has your 64 got a 32-bit internal processor? Has it got two 16-bit multi-tasking slave processors? Has it got several thousand colours and a high-resolution display system? The answer to these questions is of course a resounding 'NO'. This being the case, it then prompts one to ask why on earth have Activision even attempted to convert, let alone actually release the abomination that graces the ZZAP! monitors at the moment. Talk about a pointless exercise! Enduro Racer **is diabolical. It doesn't look, sound or play anything like the original – in fact, it doesn't play at all well full stop. Do yourself a favour and forget it.**

He flies through the air with the greatest of ease, that daring young man in this travesty of an arcade conversion ▼



PRESENTATION 79%
Good title screen, plus high-score table, restart, pause and redefine keys options.

GRAPHICS 24%
Poorly drawn sprites and backdrops create an unconvincing 3D effect.

SOUND 48%
Mediocre tune plays throughout.

HOOKABILITY 33%
Plays like a brick, but sadly doesn't have the impact.

LASTABILITY 12%
Five quickly completed courses, and little to inspire repeated play.

VALUE 8%
A lot to pay for a dismal racing game.

OVERALL 16%
The most disappointing and unrepresentative arcade conversion available.

THE SYDNEY AFFAIR

Infogrames, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk, keyboard only

James Sydney has been murdered – a rifle bullet left his skull having first paid a call on his brain. It's your job to find out whodunnit.

The Sydney Affair – the second interactive crime investigation adventure from Infogrames – puts you firmly in the shoes of a French detective, attempting to unearth a murderer by routine investigation.



In the tradition of the great Inspector Clouseau, this adventure is a real 'shot in the dark' – there's so little to go on. The clues and statements are sparse but pleasantly presented, although the regular appearance of errors in grammar and spelling tend to mar the presentation. The input is quite user friendly (a fair amount of abbreviation seems to be acceptable), but the standard reply of 'without interest' for both incorrect input and irrelevant questioning could throw even the most ardent adventurer off the track. This mystery has definitely been designed and programmed for the experienced sleuth.

▼ **Obviously James Sydney's home life was a little strained . . .**



On beginning the case you are faced with the scene of the crime. A thorough search of the deceased and his surroundings reveals certain items of evidence – photographs of which may be taken by positioning a cursor on the desired spot and pressing f7. Items of interest are shown in close-up and a description given.

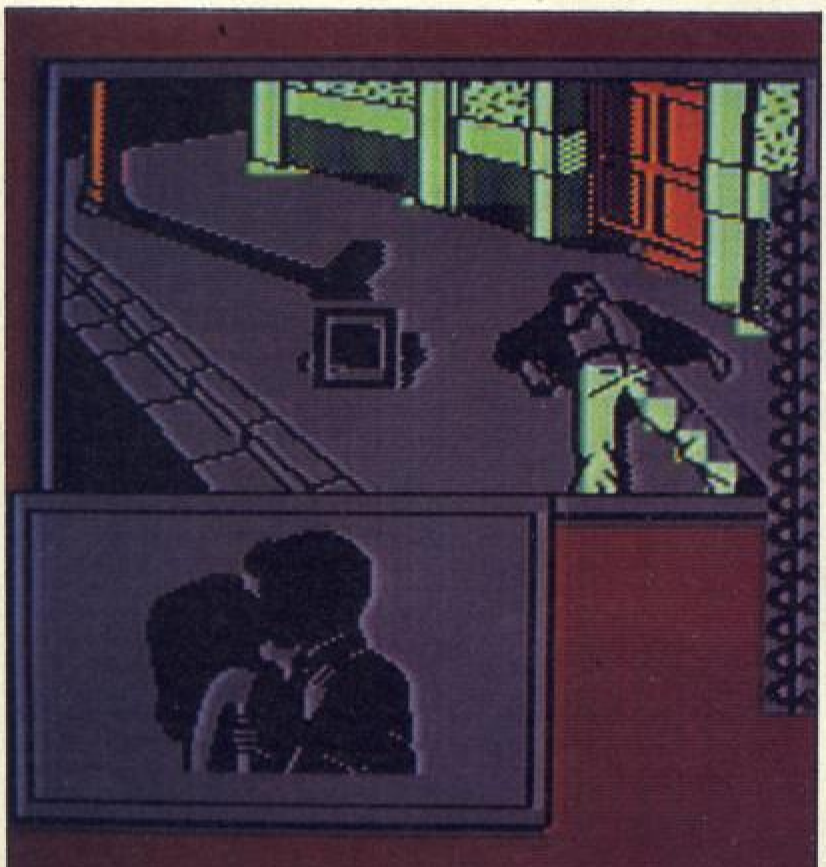
When the whole screen has been scrutinised, you are taken to the flat from where the shot was fired. Here the same routine is carried out, with you looking for clues and making notes as you go.

When all the evidence has been obtained, you return to the police station and begin collating the facts. An information screen appears from which you can access the 'Diamond Computer Network' to find out information about the deceased, his family, and witnesses to the crime. This network also allows an examination of the evidence.

The computer system links you to different sections of the police network such as the District Squad for Judicial Information, the Judicial Research and Comparison Centre and other police stations. By using text commands information regarding your case may be obtained from these, if they have any to give.

The option to compare witnesses statements and evidence also arises, and complete assimilation of all the data regarding the case should point the finger of suspicion at one person. You then make an arrest and, hopefully, put the villain (or villainess) behind bars. However, arresting the wrong person could seriously mar your career prospects.

▼ **It looks like the dead man was into photography. Candid, eh?**





The first section is almost pointless, simply move a cursor over the screen and collect evidence – it's almost impossible to overlook or miss anything. The game really starts in the second section but even this is highly frustrating due to the lack of instruction. There's no atmosphere, and communicating via the computer is slow and uninteresting. Sure, a fair bit of thought is involved when cross-referencing evidence, but I never felt as though I was making any significant difference to the outcome. The parser is limited, and the response 'Without Interest' to a slightly incorrect input makes many an unwelcome appearance – which hardly inspires further play. For a whodunnit with class, try Killed Until Dead **– it's far more absorbing, amusing and playable.**



Infogrames' follow-up to The Vera Cruz Affair **is not terribly inspired. The first section is easy enough, and obtaining clues follows a logical enough path, but it is when stage two has been entered that things start grinding to a halt. The difficulty involved in using the Diamond Computer Network is exacerbated by the lack of instruction included. This seriously flaws the program, and dampens the enthusiasm, which was reasonably high until this point. Definitely user-unfriendly,** The Sydney Affair **may still appeal to fans of the earlier** Vera Cruz Affair, **but for a first-time buy whodunnit fans should look elsewhere – maybe to** Killed Until Dead?

PRESENTATION 54%
Inadequate instruction which makes the game seem more complex than it really is. Minimal on-screen information, and no save game option.

GRAPHICS 52%
Two mediocre screens with some well drawn, varied and distinct faces.

SOUND N/A
Nothing more than a gunshot on the loading screen.

HOOKABILITY 65%
The first stage is simple to complete and successfully finding clues is quite enjoyable, but the second stage can prove deceptively overwhelming.

LASTABILITY 37%
Limited and somewhat predictable structure which fails to provide any long term entertainment.

VALUE 45%
Overpriced, especially when the limited gameplay and presentation is taken into account.

OVERALL 57%
Nothing more than an average and limited murder mystery.



BARBARIAN

Palace Software, £9.99 cass, £12.99 disk, joystick only

Designed by Steve Brown and written by Stanley Schembri (the duo behind *Cauldron II*) comes a beat 'n' hack 'n' chop 'em up with bloody and sweaty overtones.

The scenario is straight out of the myths of old, telling of Drax, an evil sorcerer, who's lusting after the voluptuous Princess Whittaker (and who can blame him?). Unless she's delivered to him he will unleash his unspeakable wrath upon the people of the Jewelled City. However, there is one alternative – the Jewelled City must offer up a champion to defeat the evil sorcerer and his muscular henchmen.

Champion after champion is defeated and the Jewelled City is losing hope, when, from the forbidding wastelands of the north, comes an unknown barbarian willing to take on the awesome task. Who is this mysterious warrior?

Barbarian comes in two parts, loading in no particular order. The first is a combat practice routine for one or two players, designed to help you get to grips with the fighting moves and assess the strength of opponents. On the flip side is a fight to the death, where the Princess' future is at stake and you eventually come face to face with Drax himself.

Swords flash, blood flies, and despite Drax's close attention the bad guy loses his head



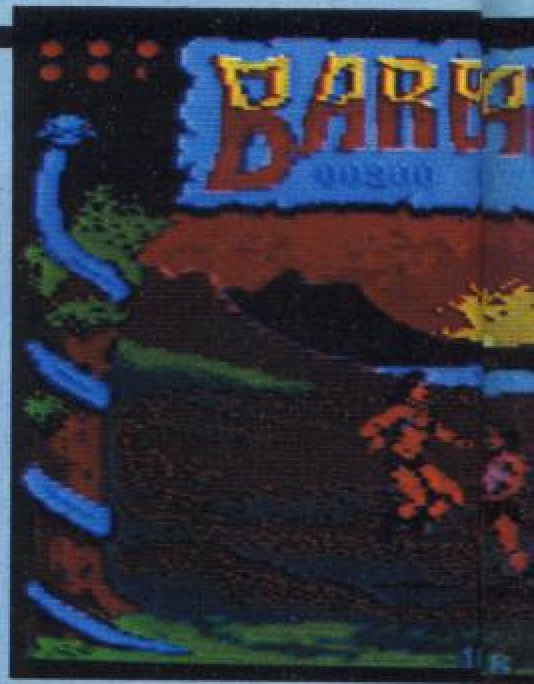


Yeah! All the thrills and spills of a nightmarish abattoir – blood spurts, decapitated heads flying around, guts and gore and hunchback cripples dragging away corpses – this is what I call a real hack 'em up! The computer opponents have a great degree of 'intelligence' and consequently the game is varied, challenging and unpredictable – something that's vital if a beat 'em up is to be successful. Once you've beaten Drax the second program's appeal might diminish, but the practice game is the sort of thing that gets played time and time again.

Sixteen moves are available: eight controlling body movements, accessed by simple joystick movement, and eight attacking moves that come into play when the fire button is pressed. The jumps, twirls and rolls executed by the two combatants are complemented by truly macho swordplay, as the massive broadswords are brandished to devastating effect.

The hero has to fight his way through eight increasingly difficult levels, moving on to face a stronger, faster opponent each time a foe is vanquished.

On the final screen you come face to face with the dark and mysterious Drax. He can't be bothered with lowly swordplay and launches into battle by hurling bolts of magic. Should you manage to avoid the magic and defeat Drax in a traditional physical assault, Princess Whittaker is saved and is likely to want to make a clean breast of things . . .



The evil troll removes yet another vanquished villain – but the buxom Whittaker is still in Drax's clutches

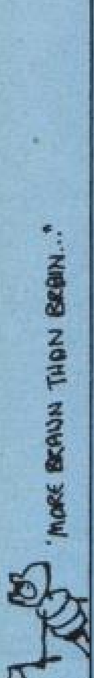


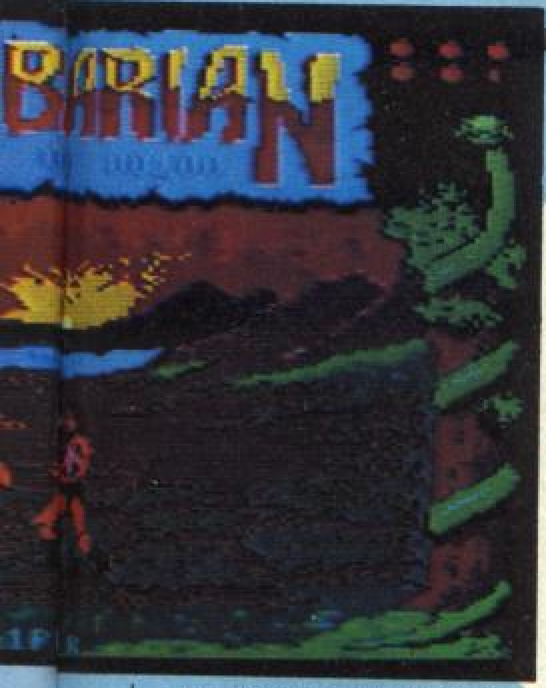
Battered and bruised, the barbarian fights his way through the forbidding forest





Muscles rippling, hair flying in the wind, my bronzed body glistening with sweat I leap in for the kill – my adversary defeated, I raise my hand in acknowledgement and know that the comely maiden will soon be mine. Barbarian **has turned me into a jumping and slashing he-man (with two-foot long hair to boot – paradise!). The single player game is a touch unbalanced, with the first three opponents a little easy and the next few practically invincible – but the two player section is the most realistic and exciting slash 'em up yet. This is everything that** Highlander **could and should have been – there are a variety of convincing moves and tactics, perfectly complemented by the realistic sound effects There's far more to** Barbarian **than the three acres of Maria Whittaker's flesh which adorn the packaging, so cut a path to your local software shop now!**





▲ A rain-starved valley becomes nothing more than another arena in this battle to the death



Barbarian represents new heights in bloodsports: there's plenty of life-juice sloshing around, and the lopping-off of heads is sickeningly realistic. The animation is probably as good as you're going to get on a 64, and the action is fast and *very* furious. Despatching Drax's guardians provides a fair challenge, but I'm not too sure about the lastability
There are relatively few backdrops, and the gameplay doesn't alter significantly from screen to screen. Someone is bound to moan about the game's violent aspects, but until then, go get your copy and do some serious slaying.

PRESENTATION 88%
Well packaged and documented. Includes pause mode, practice facility and engrossing demo – and don't forget the Maria Whittaker poster!

GRAPHICS 93%
Superb movement overshadows all other aspects.

SOUND 73%
Good combative effects – but where did they get that tune?

HOOKABILITY 87%
Though initially difficult, character manipulation is soon effectively mastered.

LASTABILITY 74%
Excels mainly in the two player option.

VALUE 71%
A touch overpriced considering the limited gameplay.

OVERALL 87%
The definitive man to man combat game.

UFO

Firebird, £1.99 cass, joystick or keys

The city of New York lies glistening in the summer sun, when suddenly an alien fleet plummets out of the ozone-blue skies and attempts to lay waste America's pride and joy.

As the only available trained pilot of the experimental F21 Condor, the task of dealing with these extra-terrestrial terrorists falls straight into your lap, and so you set forth to do battle with the alien fleet.

Your Condor fighter initially appears with the 'Big Apple' in the distance. Waves of attacking aliens come zooming toward your ship, which moves around the lower half of the screen, blasting any ships within range.

The Condor's armament easily deals with the approaching alien vessels, but if used too frequently, overheating occurs, temporarily shorting out the systems and leaving you defenceless.

Any unavoidable barrage of fire can be negated by use of the Condor's shields, activated by pressing the space bar. Although impervious to the alien firepower, the shields only last a limited amount of time, therefore they should be used sparingly to avoid complete drainage.

Successfully blasting all of the attacking fighters allows access to the hypersonic transit corridor, which leads to the next region of combat.

Straying to the edges of the air corridor depletes the ship's energy, the loss of which causes the Condor to reappear back at the New York battle zone.

On reaching the end of the corridor, the Condor's energy and shields can be replenished, ready for the next onslaught.



UFO **looks quite nice, but the pretty graphics simply don't compensate for the lack of gameplay. This sort of basic shoot 'em up would have probably gone down very well three or four years ago, but not now – even at two quid. I soon grew tired of repeatedly shooting aliens within a limited playing area, and the change of backdrop makes very little difference. It's sad to think that Odin may well have lost their touch – I sincerely hope they pull their socks up for their next game, and prove that they can still produce high quality software with plenty of playability, and not just glossy presentation.**



Once upon a time Odin were producing brilliant stuff like Nodes of Yesod **and** Mission AD **– now they've sunk to this. UFO is visually and aurally pleasant, but unfortunately it's almost totally devoid of playability. The rocket moves very slowly and is sluggish to respond to the joystick. Consequently the battle against the myriad of fast-moving and bomb-spewing alien ships is one-sided and frustrating. Another annoying point is that all the action takes place in the bottom third of the screen, with the rest playing no part other than to look good. Overpriced, even at two quid.**

▼ Dealing out an unhealthy dose of death and destruction on the out skirts of a teeming metropolis



▼ A barren waste is the setting for the second level





As budget blasters go, UFO isn't exactly the cream of the crop: there's a fair amount of death and destruction for your money – but little else. It takes quite a while to finish any of the levels, and seeing the same, albeit very smart, screens all the time proves too uninteresting to justify it's purchase. Nice to look at and fun for a while, but hardly worth saving up for.

PRESENTATION 53%
Nothing special – unhelpful instructions and no real options.

GRAPHICS 73%
Smart backdrops and effective animation on the ships and aliens.

SOUND 38%
Bland soundtrack and spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 41%
Instantly playable, but very monotonous.

LASTABILITY 16%
Different backdrops do nothing to relieve the tedious nature of the game.

VALUE 29%
Two quid seems a lot to pay for some pretty graphics and little else.

OVERALL 19%
An attractive but very limited and unaddictive shoot 'em up.

IQ

Nu-Wave, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk, keyboard only

Originally released in America under the auspices of Electronic Arts, Nu-Wave has now obtained the rights to the logic game, *IQ*.

The main screen presents a series of dots arranged in a criss-cross pattern, each one surrounded by a territory, the boundary of which lies half-way between each dot.

Inhabiting this strange landscape are 'SAIL's – Super Artificially Intelligent Lifeforms. These worm-like creatures travel from dot to dot, leaving a coloured trail in their wake – lying half-way between territories.

Whenever a SAIL enters a dot's territory, previously laid trails are turned the same colour as that of the latest SAIL. Each dot can accommodate six trails, and the aim is to direct your SAIL in such a way that it leaves the sixth and final trail to a dot. If this is achieved, the territory takes on the colour of that SAIL for the remainder of the game, and a point is awarded to that SAIL.

There are four separate SAILs, each controlled individually by either the computer or a person (up to four players can participate).

A SAIL's movement pattern follows a predestined course which is set by use of one of three commands: **New**, where the SAIL is untrained and has to be ordered as you play; **Auto**, which puts the SAIL under computer control and is ordered to make intelligent moves as play progresses, and **Wild**, where once again the SAIL is computer controlled, but follows a random series of trails throughout.

On choosing the **New** command, a SAIL is trained to follow a new course by manually directing its action. As soon as the SAIL recognises a repeatable pattern, it memorises it and continues on that course until it meets a configuration that it does not recognise. The SAIL then stops moving and flashes, signalling that it needs re-directing to continue its course.

The SAILs are unable to move over a previously laid trail, and cannot move to a dot already occupied by another SAIL. If the SAIL is forced into one of the above situations and no other action can be taken, it dies and takes no further part in the game.

The game itself ends on the demise of all the SAILs, at which point the territories gained are highlighted separately, and the final scores displayed.





What is IQ? Well, it's a strange sort of entertainment that only exists because of computers – it couldn't have been conceived anywhere else. It's soothing on the ears and eyes, relaxes the brain and helps you unwind! It has a wealth of options and is the sort of program that one loads up and plays months after it was first bought. It's also an off-beat luxury which many won't appreciate because it's not blasting or adventuring. It exists in its own right, and is essentially incomparable.

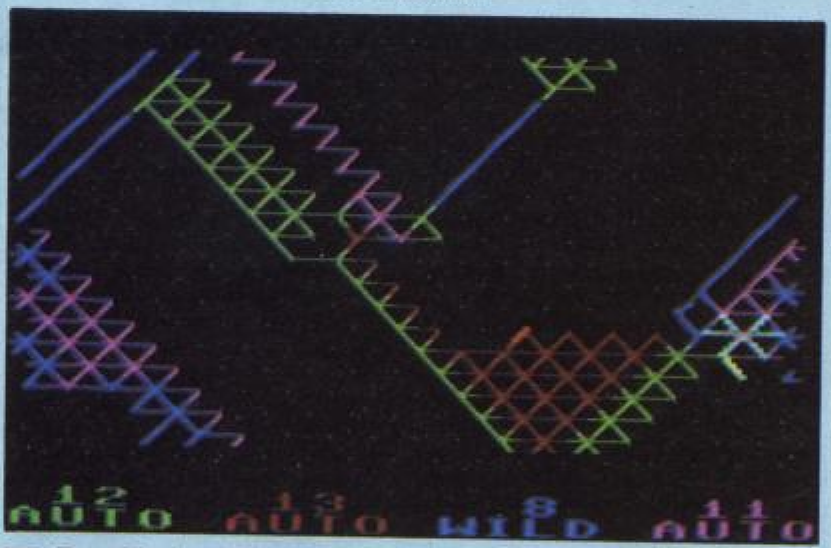


What a strange piece of software. It's over three years old, and doesn't look up to much, but I found it most absorbing and highly relaxing. Playing against up to three computer opponents provides many hours of entertainment, but it's far more satisfying to play against one or more human opponents. I can't see IQ appealing to many, due to the bizarre concept, but anyone who likes to indulge in a little harmless fun at a leisurely pace will be amply rewarded.

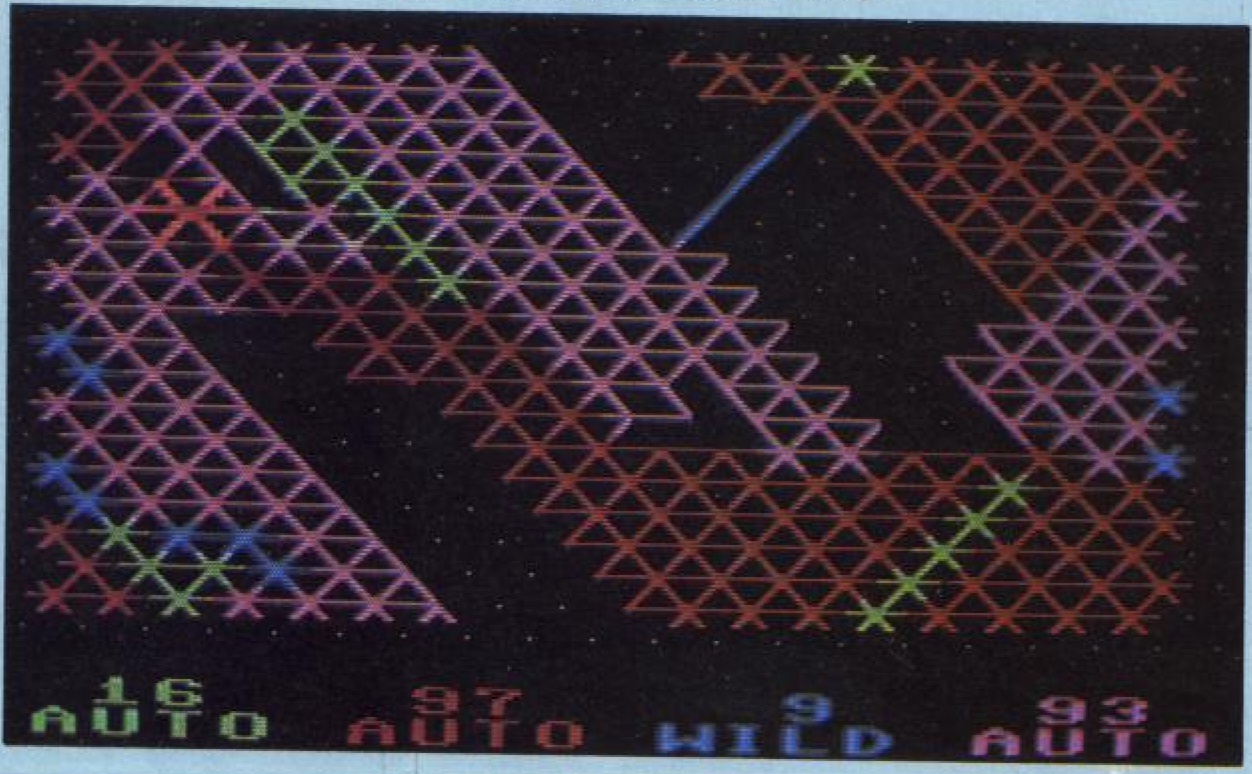


This is a very unusual and innovative game, loosely based on the pen-and-paper game, 'Boxes', but taking it several steps further. Possessing a strangely addictive quality, IQ is great fun to play with four players, and is also quite relaxing to watch when completely computer controlled (*a la* Psychedelia). I have a feeling that it might not become hugely popular, which is a pity as it would make a decent addition to anyone's software collection.

▼ Tinkle Tinkle . . . four SAILs happily do their own thing, in this binary equivalent of a two-dimensional mobile



▼ Two of the four SAILs go wild, although one of the computer-controlled SAILs has claimed the most territory





PRESENTATION 84%
A good demo mode, and many useful options including interactive multi-player action.

GRAPHICS 61%
Unusual, colourful, abstract and very effective.

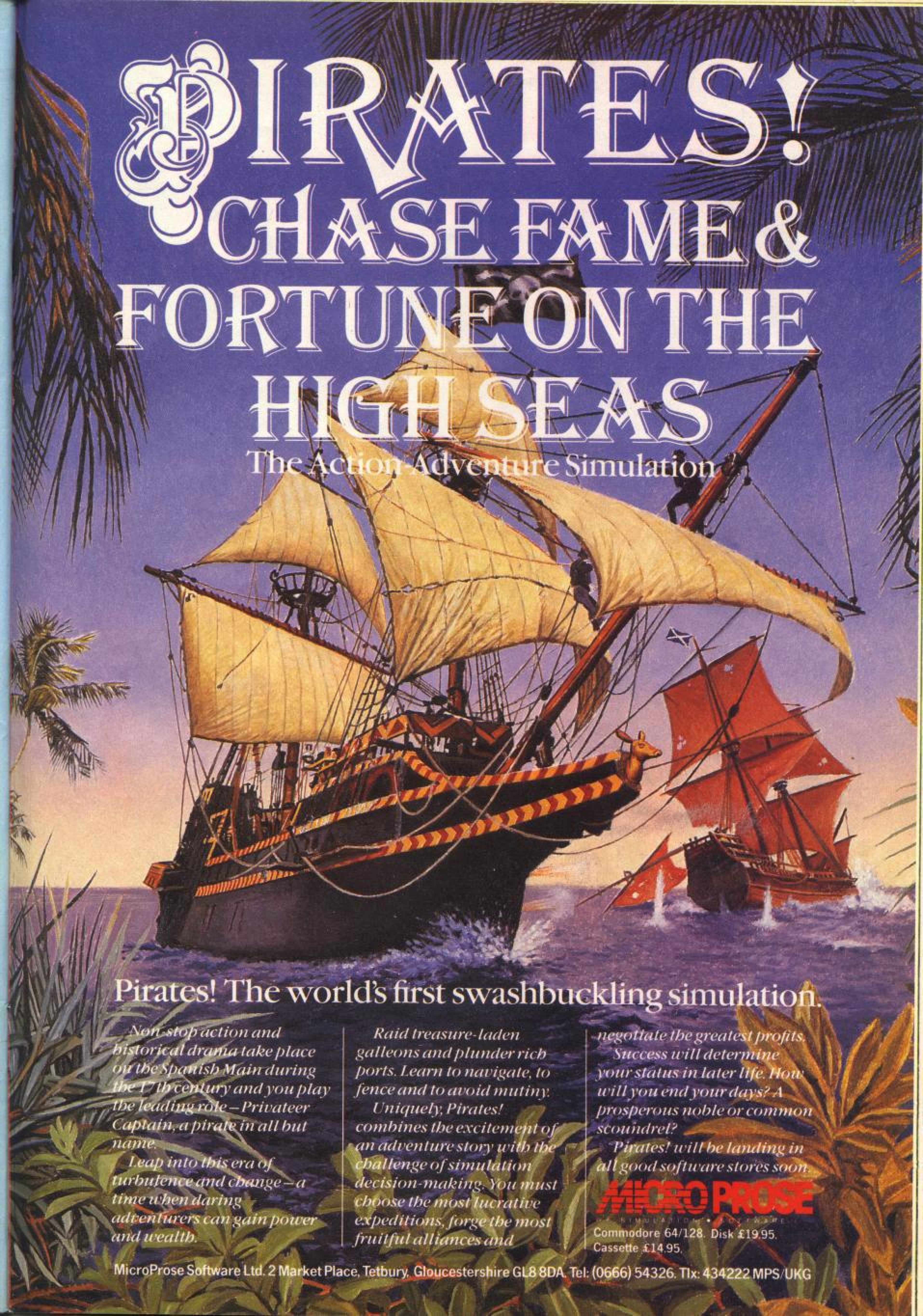
SOUND 62%
Tinkling bell sounds with an odd appeal.

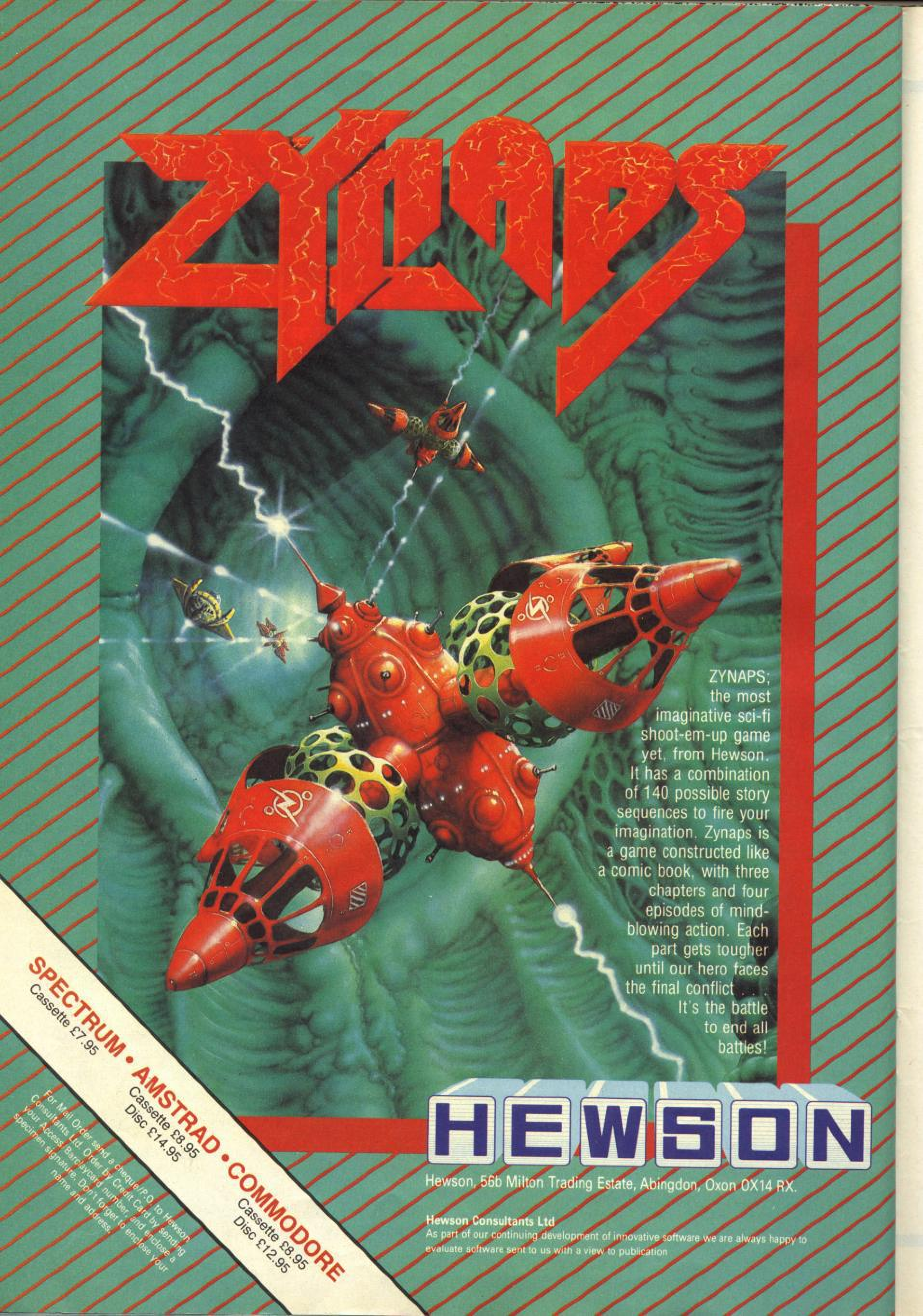
HOOKABILITY 80%
Deceptively easy to pick up and play.

LASTABILITY 73%
Varied options help to sustain the initial appeal.

VALUE 68%
Slightly overpriced for what's on offer.

OVERALL 84%
An innovative and highly appealing logic game.


PIRATES!
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DEATHSCAPE

Starlight, £9.99 cass, £12.99 disk, joystick only

Declining an invitation to attend the Mars peace summit, the insidious Varg Empire has instead chosen this time of quiet to infiltrate the Deathscape arena and take control of the vital grid network.

Previously used to settle political differences by pitting individual combatants against one another, the majority of the arena is now in the hands of the Vargs, and the task of liberating this important region is left to you.

Strapped into the cockpit of your 'Zarquon CAM III' multi-role fighter, you enter the grid system in an attempt to track down and defeat the Varg Fleet, Battle Stations and Mothership.

The grid consists of interlinking tunnels, displayed through the main view screen as a series of moving concentric squares, giving a first-person view of the proceedings. As an aid to navigation and defence, an overlay map shows your current position and that of the main Varg vessels.

As well as the myriad of small attack craft, there are three large vessels to be dealt with. The fuel dumps and generators that regularly float into view are blown up by firing missiles at them. Upon destruction they respectively release energy, used to replenish your fuel and shield stores.

Destruction of Varg fortresses provide not only extra missiles, but also a section of the code to the Varg mothership's cloaking device. Collecting all ten pieces of code allows you to leave the arena for the final confrontation with the mothership itself. Destroying this leviathan is no easy task however, with four direct hits necessary to put it out of action.

Your ship has a main control vessel parked outside the Deathscape, which controls the major functions of your ship. If this control vessel is attacked, you have the option to teleport outside the arena to protect the ship, at which point your viewpoint changes to that from the control vessel. Attacking aliens are then blasted as normal.

There are ten increasingly tortuous levels within the arena, and the player has the option of starting on any one, depending on personal preference.



Deathscape is **impressive to look at, but on playing it doesn't take long to realise that the playability and general game structure is very poor. There's no feeling of getting anywhere, and shooting the objects as they approach is a pretty dull and pointless exercise. It's sad that the content doesn't match the graphics and presentation – Starlight almost had a stunning game on their hands.**



If the size of the game was directly related to the length of the instructions then Deathscape **would be a immense game – but it's not. It contains little more than a very basic 3D shoot 'em up action, with a few enemies emanating from the middle of the screen. Putting different backgrounds behind the main action area doesn't create variety – all it does is show how shallow the content really is.** Deathscape **is very boring and repetitive, and is only helped along by a decent tune.**

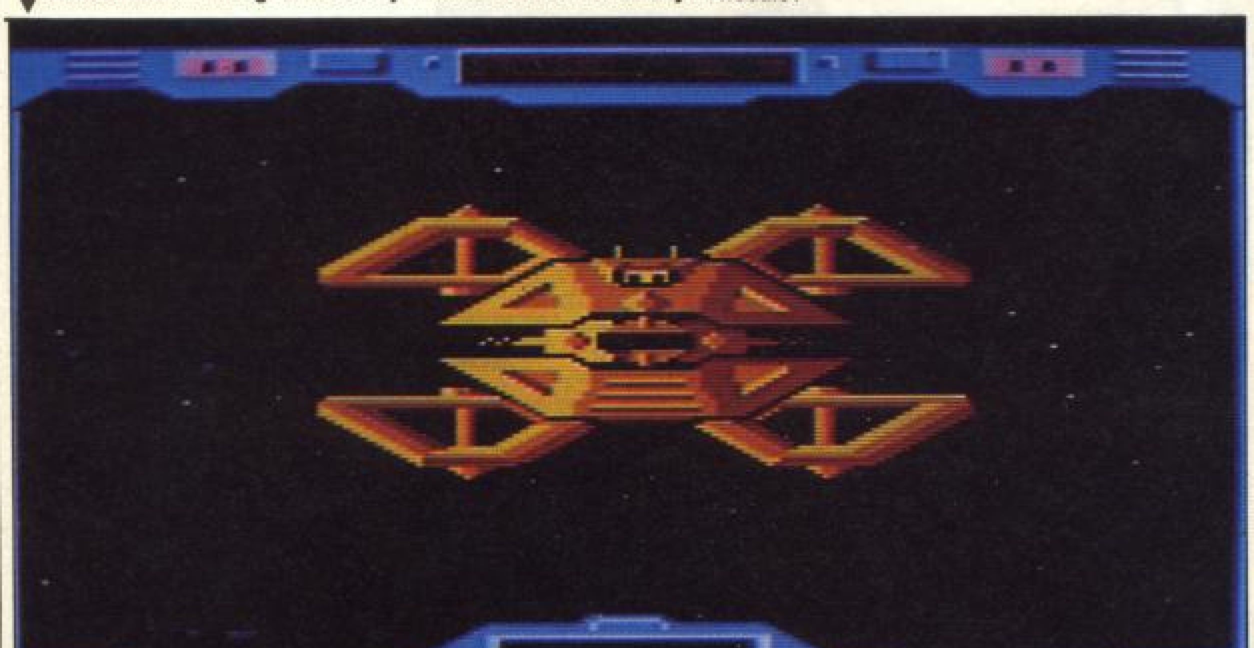


Once again Starlight have released a technically polished program, which is let down by repetitive and unrewarding gameplay. The movement is neat and convincing, but the game descends to the level of a rather shallow shoot 'em up with little to hold the interest. The instructions are also lacking, explaining all the different ships' functions, but omitting to actually tell you what they look like! If Starlight put as much work into the gameplay as they did their long-winded scenarios, I'm sure they would have a hit on their hands.



▲ Toggling the controls like mad, the pilot tries to shoot down a deadly enemy fighter

▼ A massive menacing monstrosity flies in . . . but is it friendly or hostile?



PRESENTATION 81%
Smart on-screen appearance and plenty of options, but instructions are lacking in some details.

GRAPHICS 82%
Effective 3D tunnel effect and beautiful alien ships.

SOUND 59%
Fairly bland soundtrack and spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 70%
Initially attractive and almost enthralling blasting action.

LASTABILITY 45%
The repetitive nature of the gameplay fails to the attention for very long.

VALUE 46%
Not enough variety to warrant the price.

OVERALL 55%
Another mediocre release from Starlight, which should have been a lot more than just another 3D shoot 'em up.

TEST

ROGUE TROOPER

Piranha, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys

Nestling near a black hole – strategic gateway to the Galaxy – lies the lifeless planet of Nu-Earth.

A once teeming paradise, the planet has been ravaged by years of conflict between Earth's warring factions: the Southers and the Norts.

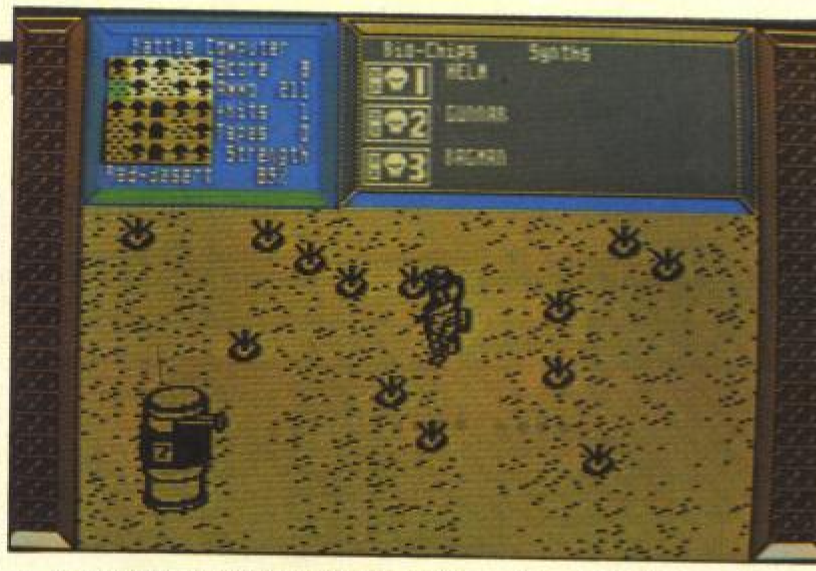
In an effort to sway the balance of power, genetically engineered infantrymen have been created by Souther scientists, who are able to withstand the poisonous atmosphere generated by decades of chemical warfare.

Betrayed by a Souther traitor, the Genetic regiment was ambushed and massacred by Nort troops. The single remaining GI has since vowed to track down the traitor and avenge the death of his comrades.

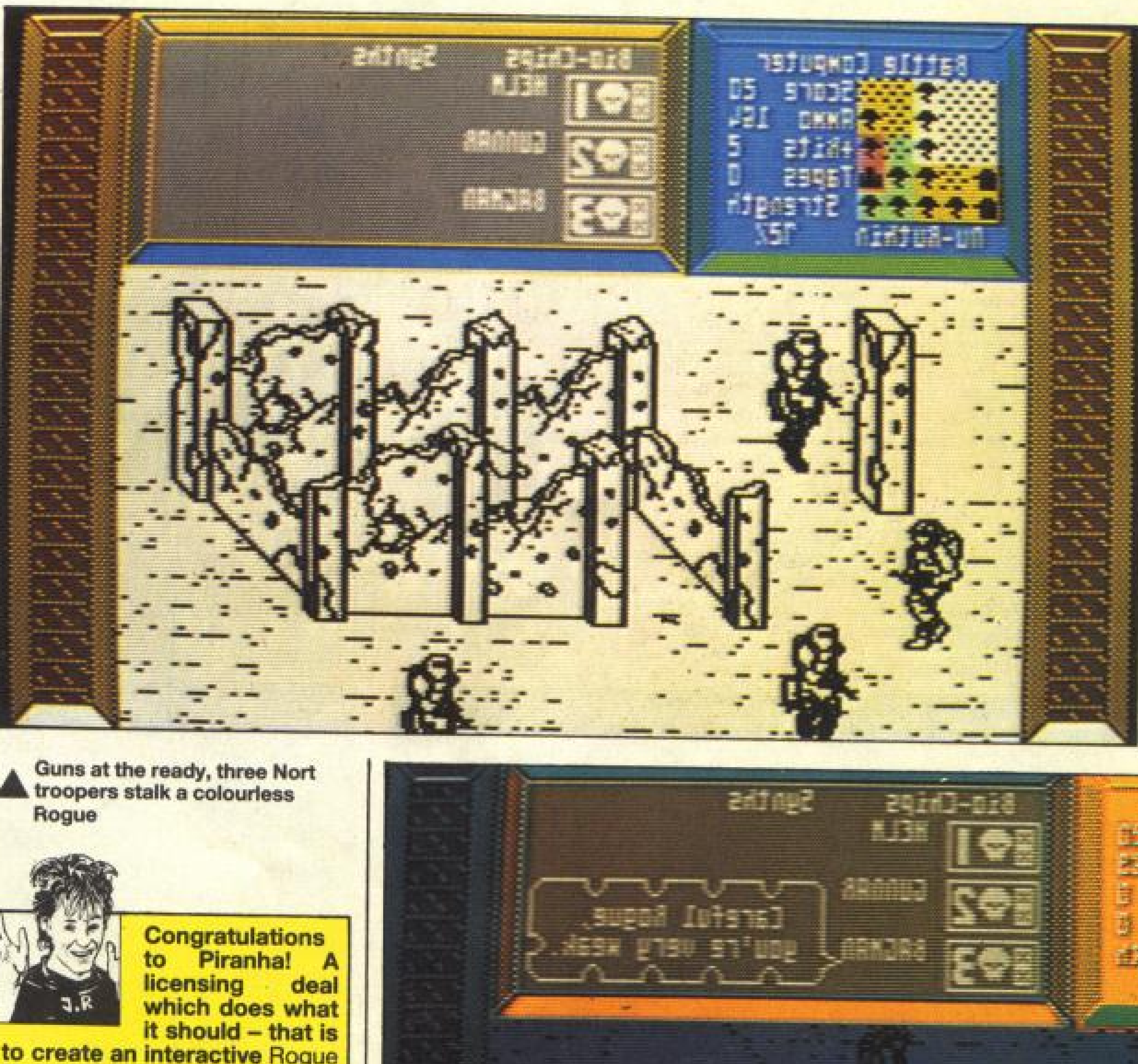
Deserting the Souther army, the Rogue Trooper now scours the planet surface for eight vid-tapes which will identify the traitor and allow him – or her – to be brought to justice.

Carrying the digitally preserved personalities of his three dead buddies – Gunnar, Helm and Bagman – Rogue has to find the tapes and present them to Millicom, the Souther military headquarters. Only then can the identity of the traitor be revealed and Rogue's friends re-gened to their former GI existence.

Rogue has to be guided around a desolate Nu-Earth landscape, avoiding both Norts and Souther



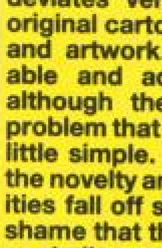
Rogue picks a path through a minefield – a path made trickier by a deadly Nort pill-box



Guns at the ready, three Nort troopers stalk a colourless Rogue



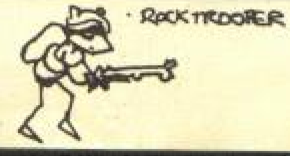
For a game which is converted from a comic strip this is a real graphic let-down. I don't like the monchrome scheme – surely the walls could have been filled in, and a little more colour would have gone down a treat. The gameplay is repetitive and there's no real atmosphere, a vital element of the original story. There's hardly any sound – just a few unimaginative whistles and bangs. The structure is simple, but this simplicity leads to a loss of addictive qualities. There is a certain amount of enjoyment to be had, but a tenner seems a lot to pay for such a limited concept.



Congratulations to Piranha! A licensing deal which does what it should – that is to create an interactive Rogue Trooper **story on the 64. It's thoughtfully designed and deviates very little from the original cartoon strip storyline and artwork. It's also enjoyable and addictive to play, although there is the slight problem that the gameplay is a little simple. After completion the novelty and addictive qualities fall off sharply, and it's a shame that there isn't more of a challenge – a little more depth could have led to a really special product. Perhaps there will be a** Rogue Trooper II **. . . I live in hope.**

Bagman offers advice as Rogue's strength diminishes. There's a medi-kit nearby, but Norts are on the guard . . .







2000 AD time again folks. Yet *another* character gets the binary treatment and . . . well, it's not too bad. The action is a little slow, with Rogue and the enemy troops tip-toeing about in a very effeminate fashion. The backdrops are pleasant and the game hangs together well, but when all eight videos have been collected (a not too difficult task in itself) the urge to return may well disappear completely. This is one of the better licenses to appear recently, although it's still not worthy of the character.

troops, and hazards such as pillboxes and mines.

The planet's surface is shown on-screen in 3D, with a local scanner at the top of the screen giving Rogue's immediate location.

The three bio-chips are also displayed, and constantly give advice and encouragement to Rogue as he continues his quest. They also give details about his life-status and ammunition reserves – presenting a visual warning when levels are falling low. Extra supplies are to be found scattered about the planet's surface, however, and Rogue collects these by simply walking into them.

Once the eight vid-tapes have been found, Rogue can make his way to the Millicom spaceship, where the information can be beamed to Millicom HQ. The traitor can then be recognised and captured, and Rogue can re-join his friends.

PRESENTATION 82%
Adequate instructions and useful on-screen information.

GRAPHICS 71%
Well defined monochrome backdrops and characters – possibly an attempt to recreate the feel of the comic strip.

SOUND 19%
A few simple spot effects which fail to generate any atmosphere.

HOOKABILITY 70%
The action is straightforward, but hardly enticing.

LASTABILITY 42%
A simple objective which is fairly easily achieved.

VALUE 56%
Expensive, considering its limited lastability.

OVERALL 69%
A competent tie-in which is fun to play, but sadly lacks any long-lasting challenge. May well appeal to fans of the 2000AD comic strip.

GUNSTAR

Firebird, £1.99 cass, joystick only

Guess who's in trouble yet again? Yes, it's the earth's population.

Us peace-loving Terrans have been set upon by unknown (but presumably nasty) aliens, and the people of our beloved planet are on the brink of extermination.

Fortunately for mankind, a secret lunar research team have developed a fleet of Pulse Fighters; short-range attack craft which could help turn the tables on Earth's aggressors.

Each member of this newly formed 'Gunstar' fleet negotiates five different sections in his mission to defeat the aliens.

Firstly, an alien attack wave has to be defeated in combat – blasting their ships while attempting to avoid returning fire. Having obliterated these, an asteroid belt has to be dodged, which leads directly to the alien command ship. There are several styles of command ship, each one having several laser turrets, spitting fiery death. Successfully blasting the turrets causes the ship to disintegrate and allows an assault on the ALLOY robot – mainstay of the alien forces.

Having destroyed the robot, the battle sequence is repeated from the beginning.

If your ship is destroyed at any time during the onslaught, you are transported back to the mothership ready to begin the battle once more, starting with the alien fighters again.



Gunstar **represents quite a good bit of fun – for a while. You can blast and dodge and blast again and generally have a good time. Eventually though, the fact that losing a life sends you straight back to the beginning, no matter how far you get, soon proves very annoying indeed. It then seems rather pointless to give you three lives. Having said that, it certainly won't take long before you can defeat all five levels, and once you are familiar with them all, the urge to return will probably be non-existent.**

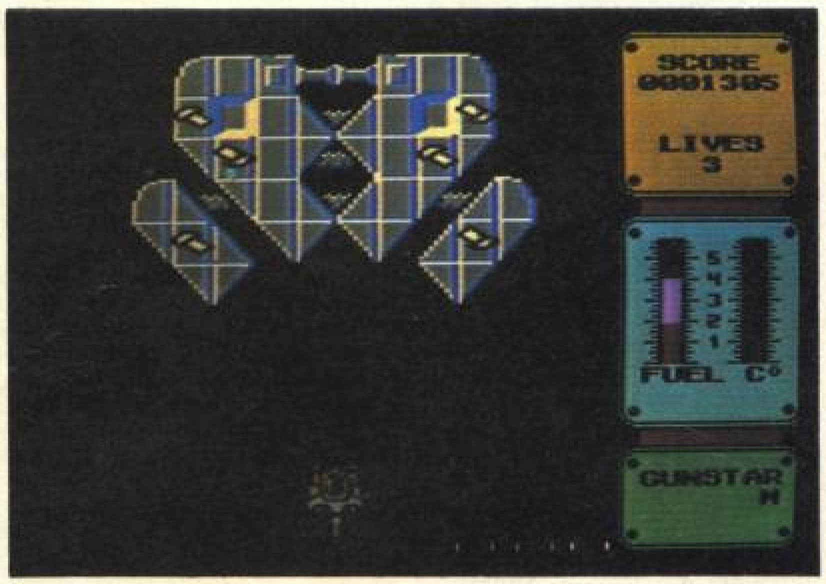


I can't believe how simple Gunstar **is! Surely the programmers could have thought up something a bit more taxing. The graphics show little imagination and create no atmosphere. Collision detection is a bit suspect, but the quick responses just about cover the inaccuracy. The intermission screens are well presented but get very boring, very quickly. Gunstar is totally boring and unaddictive. You'd have to be pretty unexciting to enjoy a game of this shallow level.**

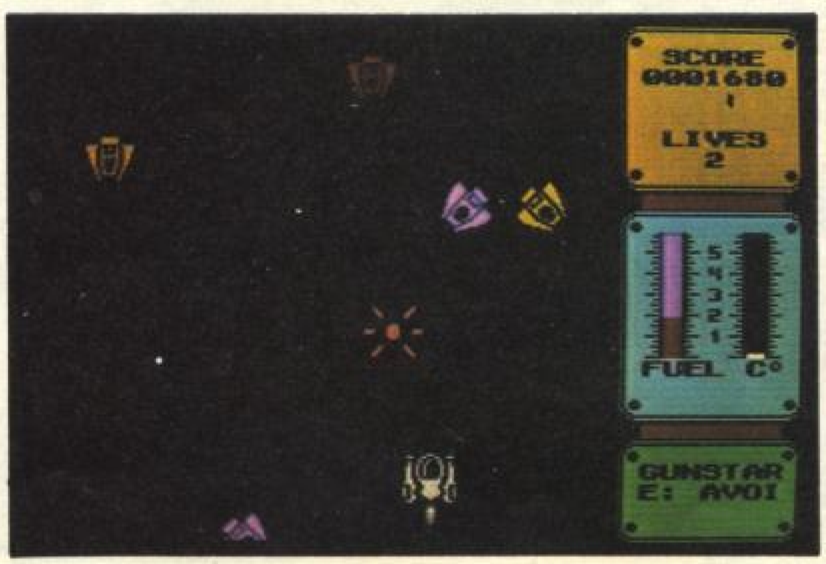


There have been so many high quality budget shoot 'em ups released recently, that I suppose it's almost inevitable that a grotty one should appear. What makes this so awful is that there are only five very limited levels to blast through, and the only thing that makes completing them difficult is the fact that you have to go all the way back to the first stage every time the rocket is destroyed. The graphics are completely uninspiring and reflect the action perfectly. Avoid it.

▼ **One member of the fun-loving Gunstar fleet singlehandedly attacks an alien command ship**



▼ **Our gallant hero makes short work of the first alien attack wave**



PRESENTATION 51%
Decent on-screen presentation, greatly marred by the need to start from scratch on losing a life.

GRAPHICS 55%
An odd mixture of Spectrumesque sprites and bas-relief graphics.

SOUND 57%
Adequate tune and effects.

HOOKABILITY 62%
Simple blasting to start you off . . .

LASTABILITY 28%
. . . and then you realise that the little you see is all you get.

VALUE 48%
Not Firebird's greatest budget release.

OVERALL 38%
An archaic concept and a poor game structure.

SPY VS SPY III

ARCTIC ANTICS

Databyte, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only

Welcome once again to the madcap world of the Spies from MAD Magazine, as Databyte/First Star bring you the third in the *Spy vs Spy* series.

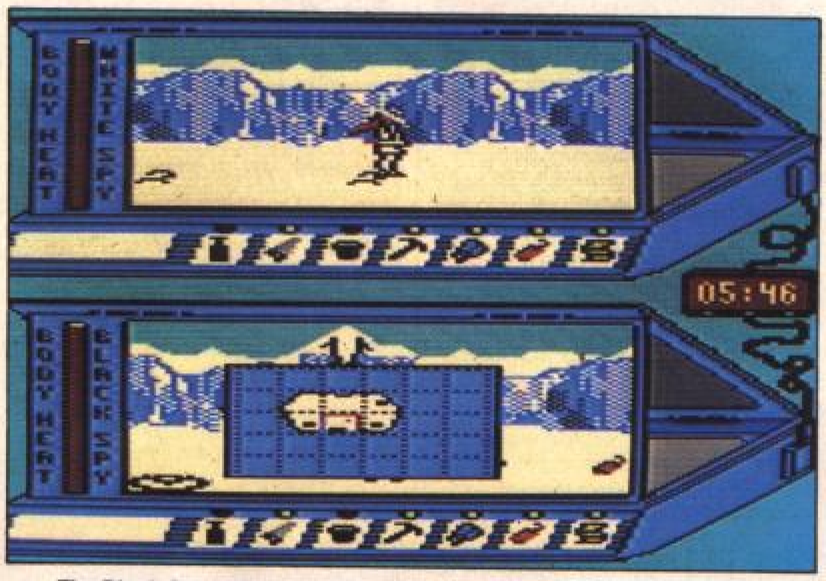


I like this a lot – it has all the humour of the original cartoon strip, combining some fabulous graphics and other neat touches. Both the one and two player games are challenging and fun, especially the latter, and there is an extensive options screen to change the parameters of the game. New traps have been incorporated to add variety, but when it boils down to it's basically more of the same. Spy Vs Spy III **might well disappoint those who already own the first two in the series, but if you haven't played** I **or** II **then give this a try.**

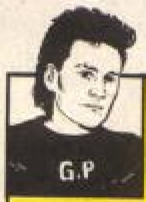
The black and white masters of espionage conspire against one another once more, this time on an Arctic island. And as with the previous games, the spurious activities of both characters are displayed simultaneously by split-screen 'Simulvision'.

Trapped in the snowy wastes, there is only one way off the island – by rocket. Unfortunately, three vital pieces have gone missing and are scattered somewhere across the island. A Gyroscope, Uranium Fuel Cell and Entry Punch Card must be collected and taken to the rocket before it can be successfully launched.

Prior to starting this hunt, you have the option for either a one or two player game. If the solo option is taken, it is possible to alter the Intelligence Quotient of the com-



▲ The Black Spy calls up a map of the island, while the White Spy contemplates his next move



I hate to say it, but I'm getting a little bored with the Spy **series. The original** Spy vs Spy **is undoubtedly the best of the bunch, with the** Island Caper **a close second. But sadly, I found** Arctic Antics **less playable than its predecessors – which raises the question . . . why bother? Surely sequels should be an improvement or a progression. If you want a** Spy **game, search out a copy of the first or second release – they may be difficult to find but in the end it's worth it.**

puter controlled spy to one of four levels. This effectively sets the difficulty of your opponent.

You also have seven islands to choose from on which to pit your strategic wits against one another, and a map is provided showing the positions of each player and those of the missing components. This can be called up at any time during the game on your 'Trapulator' – the screen which displays your current surroundings and handles your traps and options. Selections are made via a line of icons at the bottom of the Trapulator, and it also displays any items found.

Both spies have a series of booby traps available in their dirty tricks department. These include blowing up your opponent with dynamite, setting icicles to fall when walked under, cutting holes in the ice which can be fallen through, and spilling water to form a sheet of ice to be slipped on.

None of the traps are immediately fatal, however they reduce the body temperature of your spy – displayed as a mercury thermometer on the left of the corresponding Trapulator. Temperature is increased by entering igloos containing a fire. Standing next to the fire sends the spy's temperature back up again, allowing him to continue in safety.

When the two agents are in the same location, they both appear in a single screen and snowball fights ensue. Being hit by snowballs again lowers their temperature, and can prove fatal to an already cold spy.

The game ends when either one of the spies boards and launches the rocket, or when both spies have failed to escape, and the blizzard arrives turning them both into blocks of ice.



There's no doubting the technical excellence of the Spy **series, but I'm not overly excited by the gameplay, which seems somewhat laborious and complicated. The feeling of playing against an opponent is not exactly overwhelming as you may not meet up that often. Control is a little fiddly, with both actions and the choice of options being accessed from the same joystick. This is especially apparent when trying to quickly set traps or pick items up. I really don't think that it will provide any lasting interest for the solo spy.**

PRESENTATION 93%
Great title sequence and many useful options.

GRAPHICS 84%
Small, but detailed cartoon characters and suitably cold scenery, although the scrolling is a bit wobbly.

SOUND 53%
Reasonable spot effects and harsh music – fortunately this can be turned off.

HOOKABILITY 74%
Not the easiest game to get to grips with, but instantly amusing and playable.

LASTABILITY 76%
A fair amount of variety for a single player, but it's the two player option provides the most long term fun.

VALUE 69%
An ageing concept at a modern price.

OVERALL 75%
A good game in its own right, but no advance on the previous two releases.

▼ The White Spy is amused by his enemy's display of stupidity in blowing himself up – but will the Black Spy get the last laugh?



GREYFELL

Starlight, £9.99 cass, £12.99 disk, joystick only

The once jolly land of Greyfell now lies solemn in the shadow of the evil sorcerer Mauron. Having stolen the 'Orb of Life' and hidden it in his fortress stronghold, Mauron holds sway over the kingdom – gloom and despondency becoming its inhabitants constant companions.

Norman the cat, fuelled by the local tavern's ale, sets forth to find the Orb of Life, overthrow Mauron's rule and restore peace and happiness to the land.

Our feline hero is aided in his task by other creatures of the forest who hold no love for the sorcerer's ways: Potbellius the bear landlord, Offalorien the shifty spy, Willy the pig policeman, Blotto the drunken rabbit and Hitormis the wise owl wizard. When encountering these beasts, Norman is given clues to the location of the orb, which are vital if he is to complete his mission.

The way through Mauron's domain is littered with danger, for there are many of the sorcerer's followers within the forest who try to stop Norman. These include rats, wolves, dragons and killer tomatoes to name but a few. All of these are dangerous to Norman, but he is a tough cat, and can fight back by casting one of his three spells, or throwing punches.

Norman also has the ability to pick up and use objects, unlock doors and explore his surroundings – by means of an icon driven menu system, accessed by holding down the fire button and moving the joystick down.

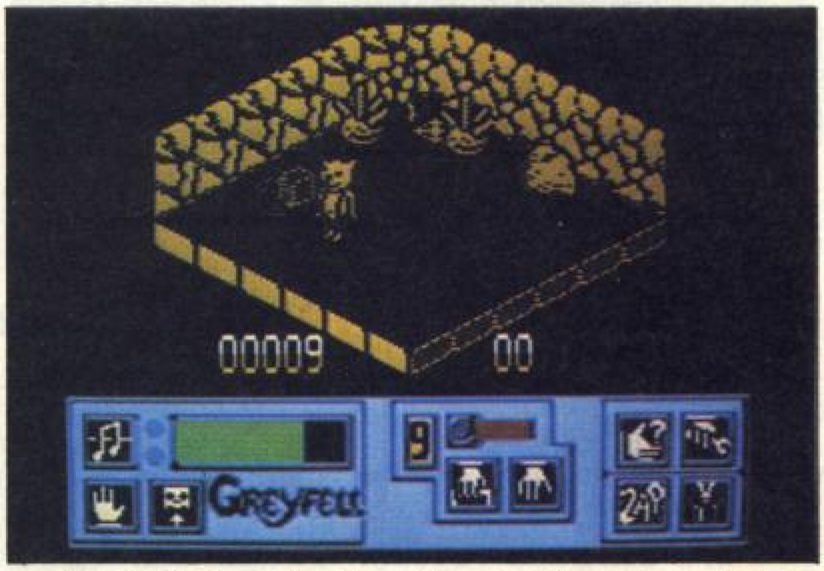
Contact with Mauron's minions depletes Norman's stamina, although t can be replenished by walking into flowers found around Greyfell. Should Norman's stamina be reduced to zero, he dies and Greyfell remains forever in the clutches of the malodorous Mauron.



All of a sudden, every other arcade adventure in the world gets a boost in the popularity stakes, as compared to Greyfell, anything looks good. The 'game' is slow, unwieldy and boring. The graphics, although quite smart, give little impression of depth and only serve as a hindrance. On several occasions, I scurried behind an object, only to be killed on contact by some hidden meanie. The final kick in the teeth is the music, which is absolute dross, consisting of 80 endlessly repeated notes. I was going to tell you to play with the music turned off, but better still – just don't play it.



I'm amazed by Greyfell. A 'Fast Moving Arcade Adventure' it announces on the inlay. Well folks this simply isn't true. If there is one thing crucial to an addictive game it's speed. The player must always be kept glued to the screen. Sadly Greyfell allows the player's attention to wander. The perspective isn't very convincing and is often more of a hinderance than an attraction. The main presentation of the play area is very bold, but the options are badly scattered around the bottom of the screen, and I found the menu method very awkward and slow to use. The main screen graphics are well drawn and have the same quality animation, but as with most games of this type on the Commodore it lacks addictiveness and playability.

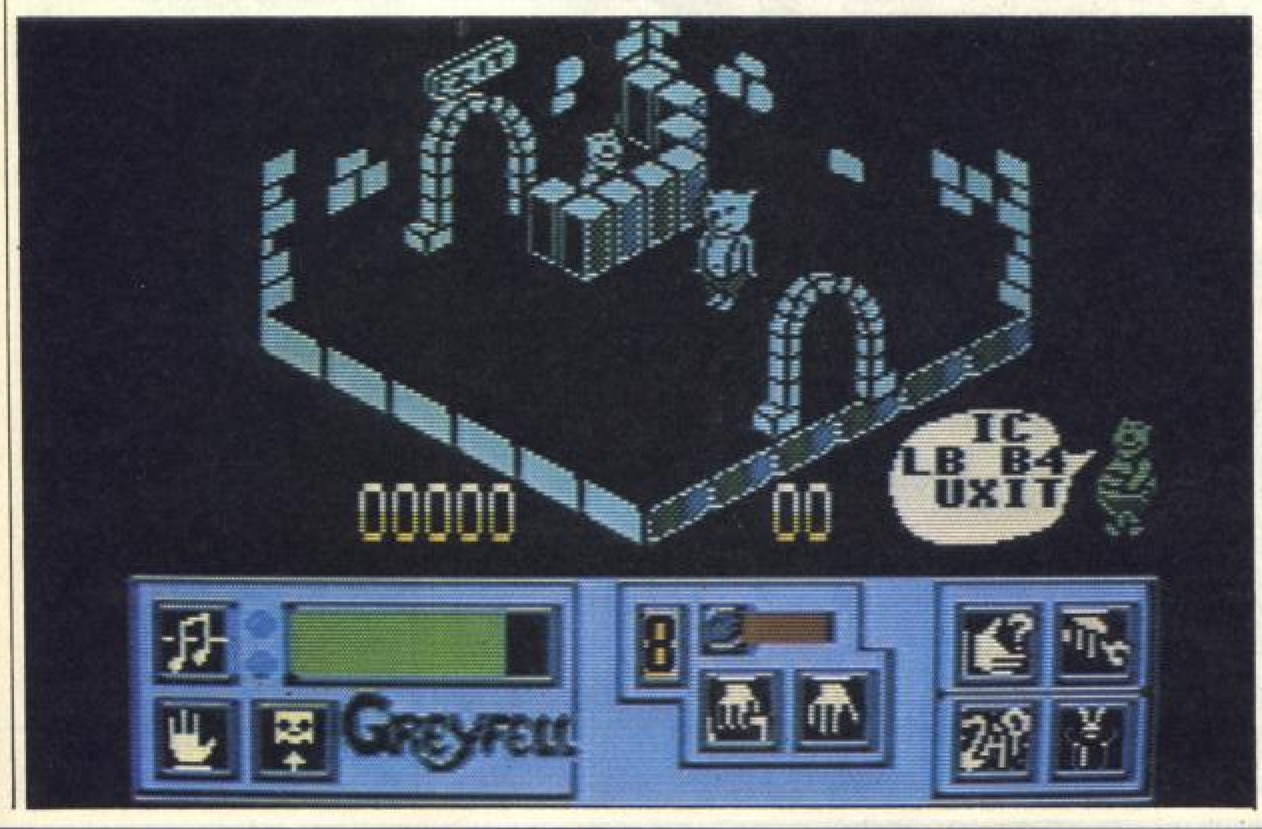


▲ **The cat, with nine points on the scoreboard, ponders on the meaning of life, the universe and everything**



An admirable attempt at a 3D forced perspective arcade adventure, but unfortunately it's far, far too slow to be worth playing. The cat takes ages to walk across the screen and the joystick response is unbelievably slow. It also takes ages to travel from one bland location to another, and the action runs at a snail's pace. Just to completely ruin the enjoyment, the icon system is also unwieldy. In the end frustration gives way to boredom . . .

▼ **A smiling rotund creature not unlike a dog happily chats in code while the hero looks on, seemingly unimpressed**



PRESENTATION 55%
Poor instructions, and an awkward control method used for both the main character and menu sheet.

GRAPHICS 48%
Unconvincing monochromatic isometric 3D with cute, slow moving characters.

SOUND 9%
Pathetic attempt at a tune and weak spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 33%
Slowness of movement and apparent inability to actually *do* anything causes frustration from the outset.

LASTABILITY 21%
Large playing area to explore, but there's hardly any urge to do so.

VALUE 22%
At ten pounds, the only great impact this has is on the pocket.

OVERALL 30%
A poor 3D arcade adventure, heavily tarnished by its slow speed and illogical and infrequent problems.

ZZAP! TEST

KILLED UNTIL DEAD

US Gold, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick or keys



Fancy taking the role of a private eye? Hercule Holmes is the house detective of the Gargoyle Hotel – residence of the wealthy and annual meeting place of the Midnight Murder club.

Each year a group of 'whodunnit' novelists congregate at the hotel, inflicting their fictional scenarios on each other – or at least they will if you don't discover the would-be murderer, proposed victim, murder weapon, location and the motive for the dastardly deed. Using nothing more than files, surveillance equipment and your wits, you have until midnight to crack the case and accuse the guilty party.

Initially, you have the option of attending the Hercule Holmes school of sleuthdom, an extended demo which plays through all aspects of the game in the form of a tutorial. Having familiarised yourself with the objectives, you choose a skill level and a specific case on which to practice your detecting skills.

Killed Until Dead provides 21 humourous cases over four skill levels: **Elementary, my dear Watson** – seven cases, including 'Mars needs Women' and 'Banana Follies'; **Murder, Medium Rare** – five cases, including 'Of Pooches and Pillows', and 'Publish or Perish'; **Cases for the Cunning** – five scenarios, such as 'The Case of the Mutilated Moose' and 'The Mystery of the Leaping Fish' and finally **Super Sleuth** – four plots, including 'Last Laff' and 'Rhymes and Crimes'.

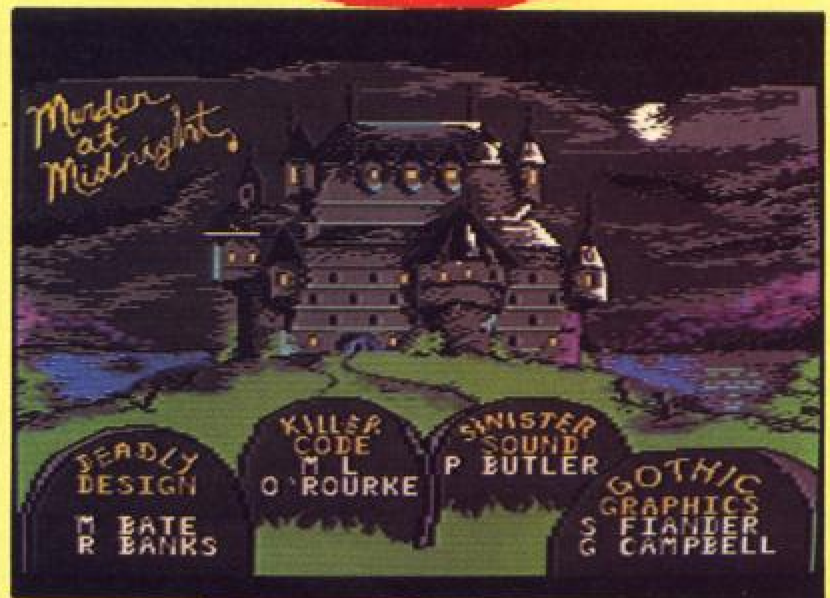
These options are available via on-screen menus, and are chosen by moving a highlighted cursor to the selected option and pressing the fire button.

Your task begins at noon – usually with a phone call from one of the club: 'check your files' they say. Huh! As if you didn't know your job. Anyway, taking a glance at the information on the club members, it appears that they're a right odd bunch. There's Agatha Maypole; ageing, forgetful and potentially lethal. Lord Peter Flimsey; a fan of Princess Anne (especially the jodhpurs). Sydney Meanstreet; an overweight author with slightly perverse tendencies. Mike Stammer; a scruffy alcoholic who's been drummed out of practically every police department in operation, and the beautiful Claudia Von Bulow (real name Tammy Claudette Belew); a girl who's had everything lifted and possesses a tattoo which she's never seen.

Interesting. Time to see if you can dig up any more dirt in their rooms . . .

Any attempt to break into one of the character's apartments is met by a trivia question based on fictional detectives and crime novels. Answering correctly allows access to the room.

'What did Sherlock Holmes do in his spare time?' Rats! That one escapes you. Uh-oh – suddenly



▼ State of the art surveillance techniques are used monitor would-be murderers



CASSETTE

PRESENTATION 78%
Not the most restrictive multi-load, although each new game must be started from scratch, and the excellent demo/tutorial is sadly lacking.

GRAPHICS 92%
Minimal but effective animation and good use of colour throughout.

SOUND 62%
Average jingles, but some neat effects.

HOOKABILITY 81%
Sufficiently addictive, despite the slightly disjointed gameplay caused by the loading system.

LASTABILITY 72%
Having to reload for each new case can prove irritating, although in many ways it makes the cases all the more rewarding to solve.

VALUE 83%
No tutorial and you have to wait a bit to get engrossed in the proceedings, but the disk version costs an extra five quid.

OVERALL 86%
A competent cassette interpretation of a heavily disk-based who'lldoit.





▲ **Hercule Holmes points the finger of suspicion at . . . his files, containing valuable information on the five suspects**



There must be something in the water that's causing all of the murders this month – this is no bad thing though, as I'm a real fan of thriller software. Killed Until Dead **is well up there with the best, it's beautifully presented and infinitely playable (except for the slightly annoying delay while the disk is accessed), and the sheer volume of detective work that's spread over the 21 cases provides a great deal of lastability. The title's inherent humour is carried throughout, but the jocular conversational style never takes over entirely and the plot remains essentially serious. The profusion of 'whodunnit' games this month doesn't detract from** Killed Until Dead**'s attraction – I'm confident that it will appeal to serious thriller enthusiasts as well as to those who take their murders with a pinch of laughter.**



Detection games don't usually fill me with enthusiasm, but Killed Until Dead **is one exception, being humourous, slick and very playable. The presentation excels on all counts, especially the highly informative demo/tutorial. A real atmosphere is generated, and is constantly enhanced by several neat touches: the clock ticks away, the sky outside grows darker, and skulls and hanging bodies keep appearing at your window! The character's faces are also wonderfully animated, producing an hilarious effect when they become hassled. One or two cases are fairly difficult, but on the whole they are quite straightforward, and as such they may not present too much of a problem for the more mature detective. This however is my only reservation, otherwise** Killed Until Dead **comes highly recommended.**

the house guard appears. Better make your exit. Come back in ten minutes when he's gone.

Here's Flimsey's room. Another question . . . Ah! got it right, and in you go. Hmmm . . . there's a note here: 'Meet me on the patio at 3.00 – Claudia.' And what's this? A blood-stained Moose outfit. Curiouser and curiouser!

Returning to the surveillance apparatus allows you to set the tape recorder to monitor the conversation due to take place at three o'clock. The tape deck has all the usual controls, and can be preset for up to three half-hour sessions.

As information is gathered about the club members, the relevant data is automatically stored and can be recalled when required, avoiding the need for notes to be taken during the game.

LATER . . . Well, you've broken into all the rooms, obtained clues and got some pretty meaty conversations on tape. Time to do a little telephoning . . .

'Hello, Mike? Yeah, do you think Sydney's in danger?' (He's looking a bit rattled – stir him up some more): 'What do you know about the poison?' (You seem to have hit a raw nerve here). 'Do you think Claudia's the murderer?' Ah-ha! a panic-stricken Stammer crumbles and spills the beans. One last look at your notes, then you're off to confront Claudia, and accuse her of her proposed felony.

'Claudia? The game's up, doll: you've been planning to bump Sydney off with the poison, on the patio – and all because he stole your Moose outfit. Eh? You aren't? Oh! Er . . . look, it was a simple mistake . . . ' (You forgot about Mike). Eh? who's that at the window – a bomb! Urrrk! It's all going dark . . . oh, well, better luck next time, Holmes!

Under pressure, Lord Peter Flimsey turns monocled mutineer as he grasses on his comrade

▼





Killed Until Dead **has class – and this is what makes it so absorbing to play. The five suspects cum potential victims have distinct personalities and character which provide many amusing situations and help to generate a suitable atmosphere. The gameplay isn't very flexible, and the mysteries are straightforward and fairly easy to solve, but at least you feel as though you've achieved something worthwhile. Definitely a sound investment for budding detectives.**

DISK

PRESENTATION 95%
Slick and extremely polished, although the multi-load interrupts a little too often.

GRAPHICS 92%
Minimal but effective animation and good use of colour throughout.

SOUND 62%
Average jingles, but some neat effects.

HOOKABILITY 86%
Difficult to stop playing once you become conversant with the controls and objectives.

LASTABILITY 77%
Twenty-one cases to solve, but many of them are quite simple.

VALUE 83%
Expensive, but worthwhile.

OVERALL 88%
A superbly executed binary who'lldoit, let down slightly by a lack of variety and depth.

FROST BYTE

Mikro-Gen, £7.95 cass, joystick or keys

Things are looking grim on the planet Cosmica. The Kreezers, harmless little springy creatures and inhabitants of the planet, are being hassled by huge monsters who are rounding up the population for dinner. The place where the monsters are storing their potential feast is a huge underground ice cavern, deep below the surface . . . and what a horrid place it is too.

Oppression breeds rebellion, and in this case it's Hickey the Kreezer who's revolting. This plucky fellow has managed to escape from his cage, and is now waiting for somebody to take control and help rescue his chums and guide them to freedom.

The springy hero walks left and right and jumps around the eight level flick-screen cavern – a useful series of moves, as the environment consists of floors, ledges and platforms. Spring platforms and matresses are occasionally found, and are used to gain access to the cave's more inaccessible sections.

Loathsome monsters patrol preset courses throughout the cavern. These are deadly to touch, and should be dodged or shot to avoid the loss of one of Hickey's five lives. At the beginning of the mission Hickey is unarmed, however a nearby pile of bullets are picked up and used to gain firepower.

Other items which help Hickey on his way are Energy Sweets which are collected to gain extra power. There are three varieties: Red, which give extra speed; Blue, for extra leaping ability and Green, which allows Hickey to fall further.

Each of the eight levels contains one of Hickey's chums, who is set free by touching the lock of his cage. To add to the pressure a countdown ticks away throughout the mission, with the time only replenished when a cage is unlocked. The mission reaches a premature end if Hickey fails to release a prisoner before the timer reaches zero.

Can he free the lot? Only you have control . . .


J.R

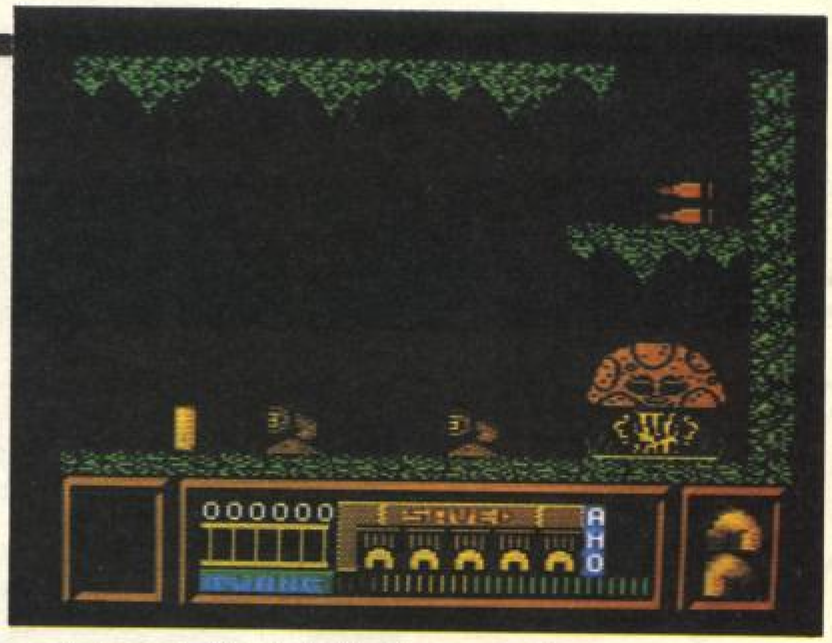
Frost Byte **is one of those obscure games which is enjoyed immensely by anyone who buys it, but never receives anything like the acclaim it deserves – simply because it's not based on some film or arcade game. It's great fun (if a bit on the tricky side) and completely rewards the perseverence it requires for completion. The graphics and sound aren't awe-inspiring, but the game reeks of playability and is addictive to boot. If you're an avid arcade adventurer, try it and surprise yourself.**


C.B

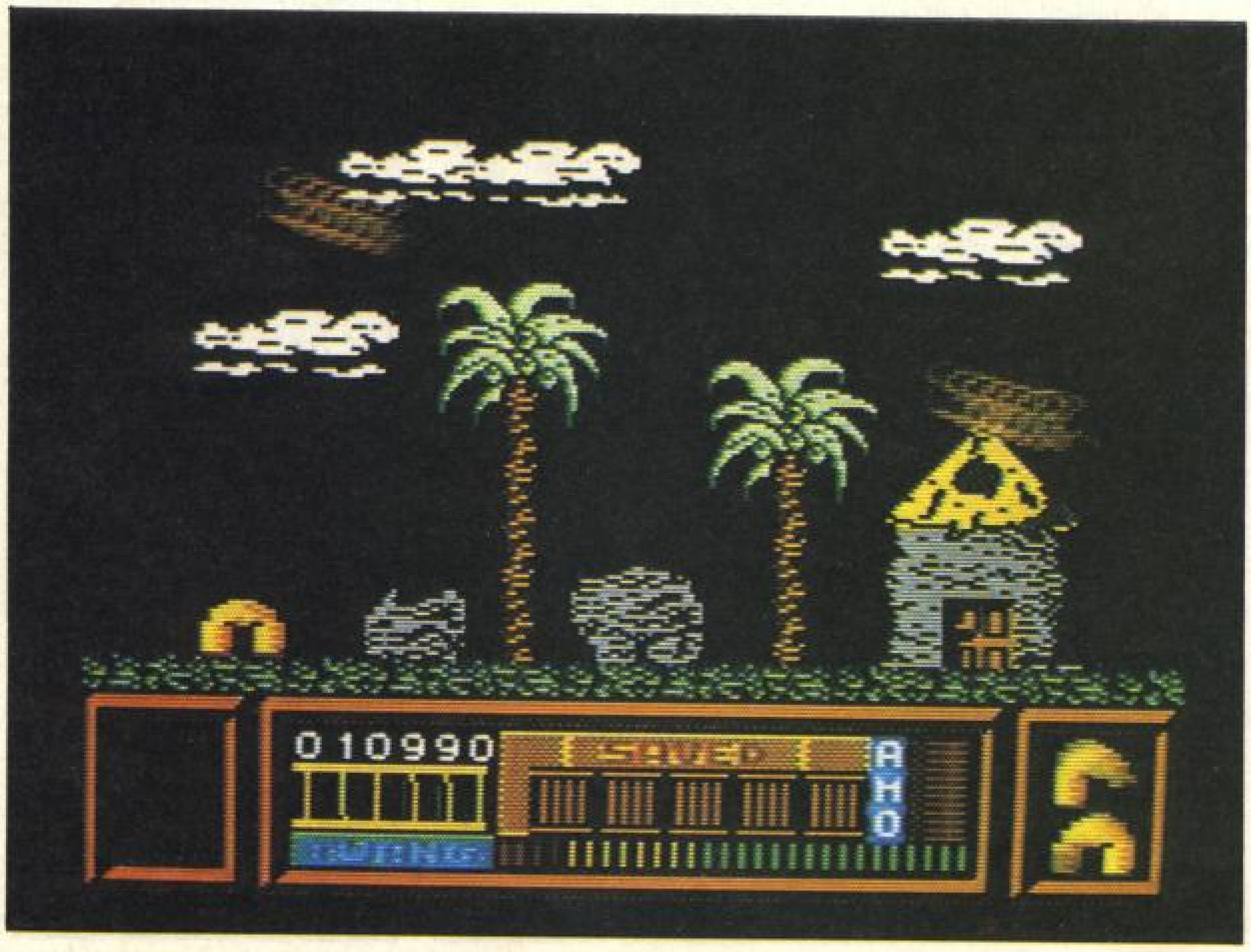
There are certain games which appeal for totally indefinable reasons, this is one. The presentation is good, but apart from the atmospheric sound effects (snow crunching footsteps and whiplash contact with the dreaded monsters) it's mostly unremarkable. The only real problem is the control method, this required an unreasonable degree of precision, thereby marring the otherwise flawless gameplay – who knows though, this may appeal to some. If Frost Byte **appeals at all, the satisfaction gained should prove to be lasting.**


S.J

This is one to test the platform freaks. Frost Byte **is frustratingly addictive, and terribly difficult to get to grips with. Leaps requiring pixel-perfect precision appear in abundance, and there are many hazards to be negotiated. Graphically, it's very smart with some very nice sprites, especially Hickey, who moves around wonderfully. There's loads of screens to be overcome and it should keep you tearing your hair out for a few weeks at least.**



▲ **Bullets are in sight – but Hickey has to spring his way past two vile creatures intent on his destruction**



▼ **Two brown aliens whizz across the screen as Hickey passes through jungle terrain**

PRESENTATION 78%
Simplistic, but pleasant and informative.

GRAPHICS 68%
Some of the chunky sprites look out of place on the otherwise reasonable landscape.

SOUND 66%
An unremarkable title tune followed by wonderfully atmospheric sound effects.

HOOKABILITY 74%
The troublesome control method takes a while to master, but the addiction remains as proficiency is gained.

LASTABILITY 73%
The action is a mite repetitive – however, eight levels of increasingly hostile environment provide plenty of scope.

VALUE 77%%
Enough depth and captivating gameplay to keep you returning.

OVERALL 78%
An enjoyable and entertaining romp for any arcade adventurer – no matter how experienced.

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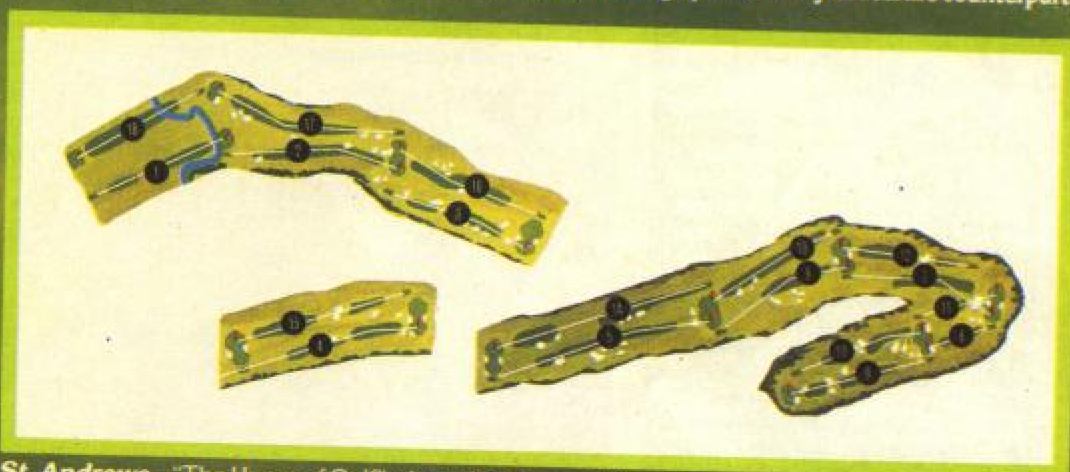


U.S. Gold proudly present the final challenge in the Leaderboard series – World Class Leaderboard – the Ultimate test of your skill and judgement, the unparalleled successor to Leaderboard and Leaderboard Executive. Now you have the opportunity to play the same courses that have challenged golf's greatest legends, three famous and classic 18 hole golf courses in which each hole is authentically reproduced for distance, traps, trees and water hazards.

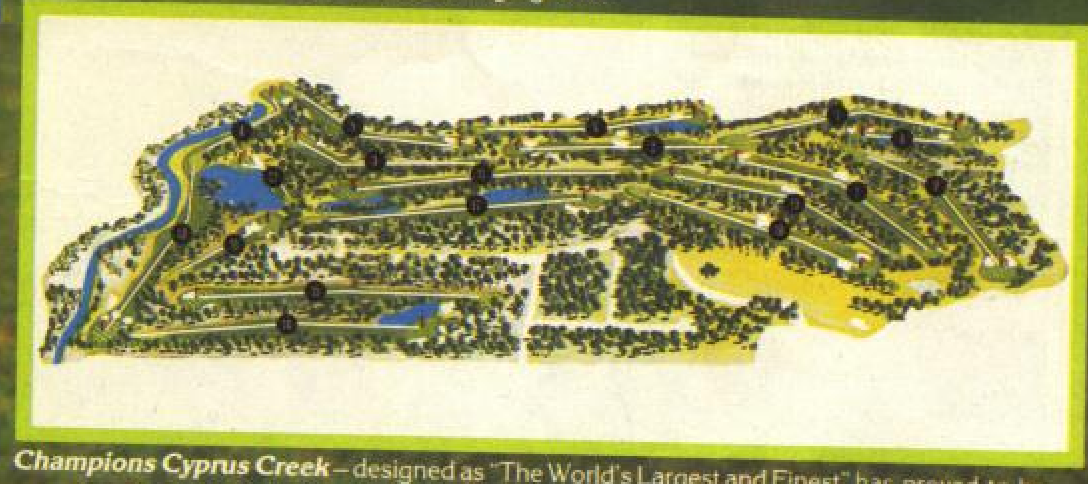
- *St Andrews*
- *Doral Country Club*
- *Cypress Creek*

And the fourth, the "Gauntlet Country Club" has been specifically designed for the "World Class Leaderboard" challenge – only those who can master the testing conditions of the best golf courses in the world will come near to mastering "The Gauntlet".

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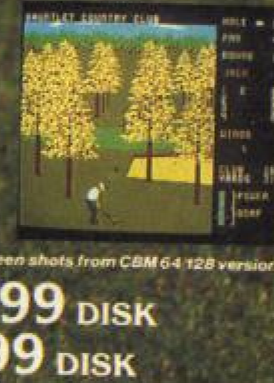


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screen shots from CBM 64/128 version

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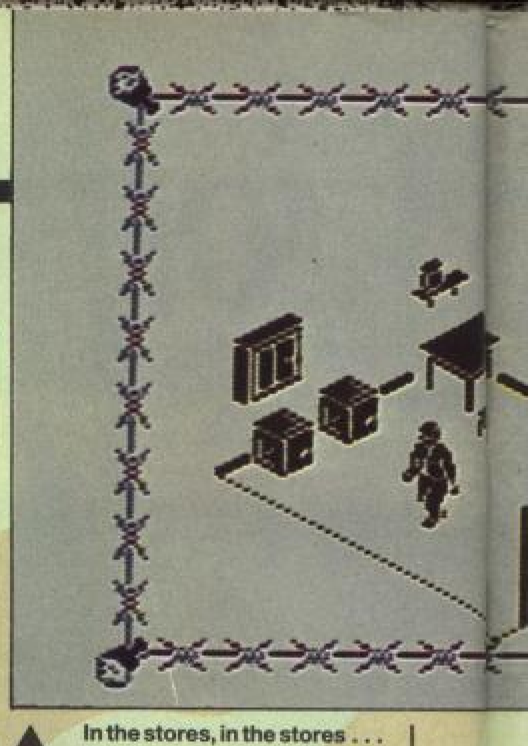
THE GREAT ESCAPE

Ocean, £8.95 cass, joystick or keys

There have been many books and films telling of the successes and failures of escape attempts from German high security POW camps throughout World War II. Ocean have now released a computer program which allows a player to step into the army boots of a prisoner of war imprisoned in Germany's most secure camp.

The date is 1942, and the recently arrived hero is appalled to find that all the prisoners have fallen into a state of complete apathy. Their morale has been crushed by several failed escape attempts, and all they do now is follow a strict routine of sleeping, eating and attending role calls, waiting for the end of the war. Our hero is still full of enthusiasm though, and has decided to make a break for freedom – with or without the help of the other inmates.

The camp is situated in a converted castle, positioned on a cold North Sea peninsula. The only access is through the main gate, and official papers are required to authorise safe passage. All activity is monitored by guards in the watchtowers, and powerful searchlights sweep back and forth throughout the night. Prisoners are housed in the centre of the complex, only leaving their cells to exercise in an area adjacent to the main gate.



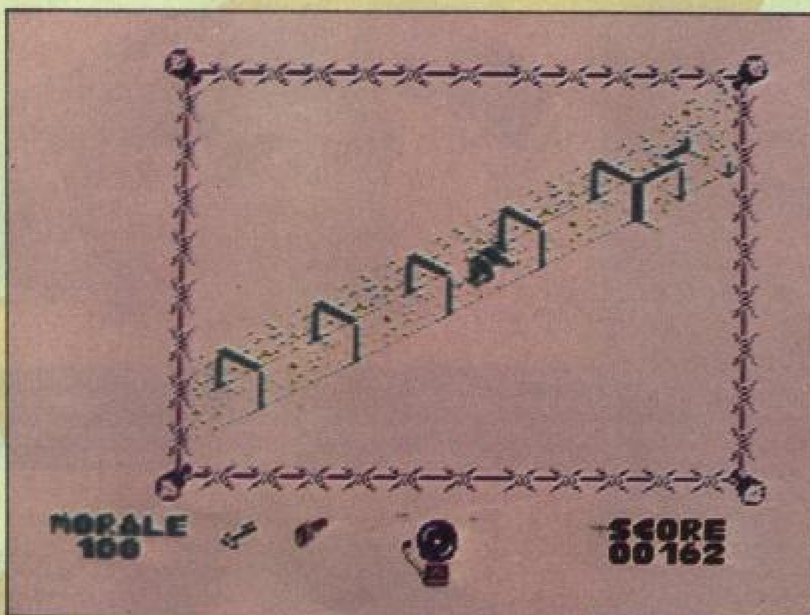
In the stores, in the stores . . . the prisoner collects his red cross parcel

Against these odds, escape seems a daunting prospect – but there is a positive side. The guards follow a rigid timetable, and their movements can be monitored and predicted. A maze of drains and tunnels used during previous escape attempts criss-crosses beneath the castle, and a range of useful object can be picked up from around the castle – keys,

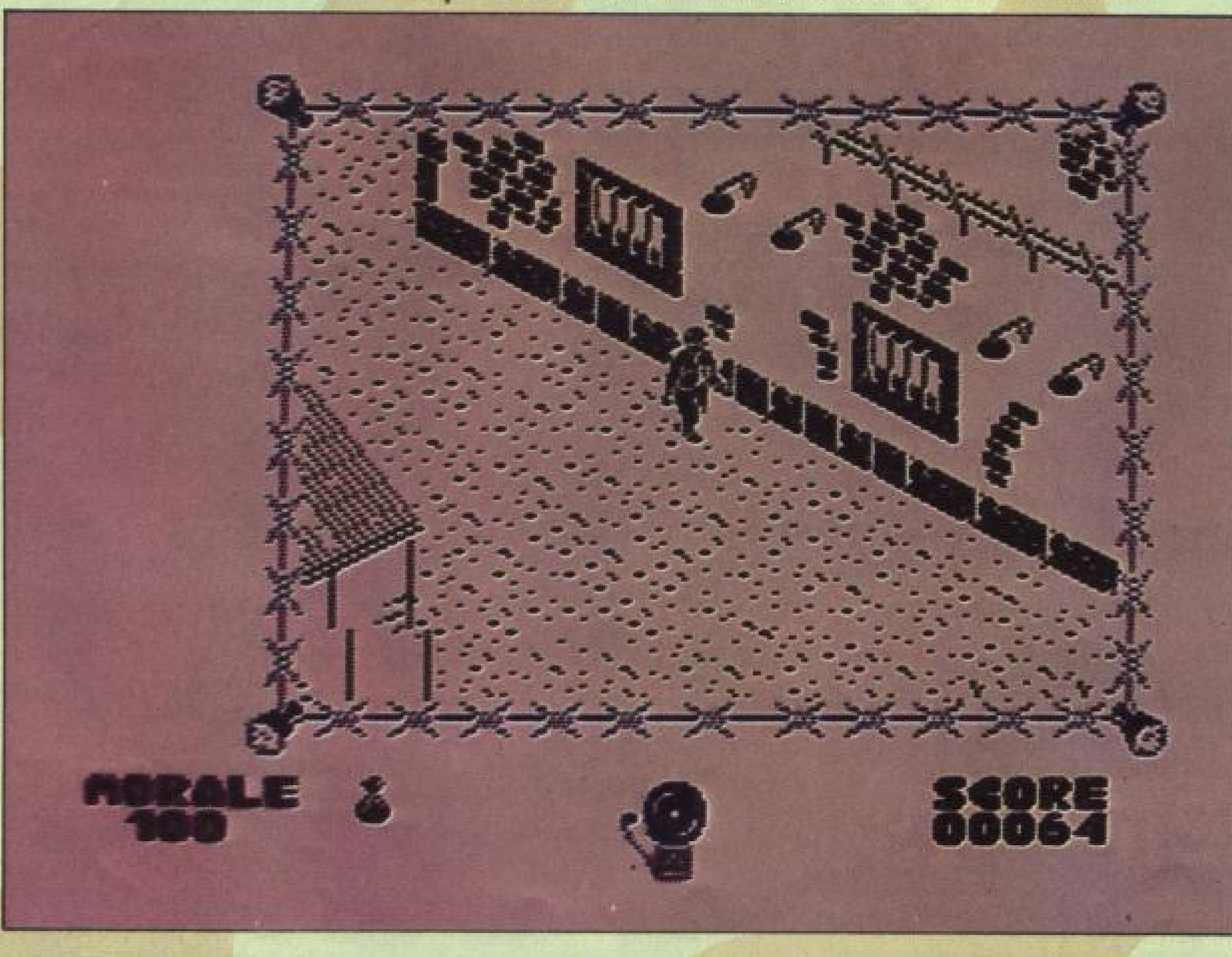


What an incredible piece of programming! A complete POW camp has been crammed into the Commodore, right down to the very last detail. The prison and surroundings have been extremely well planned, and the research which must have gone into the production of the program is admirable. It's a shame this depth of design isn't incorporated into more programs. What makes The Great Escape **so special is the phenomenal amount of freedom the player is given within the game environment. That, coupled with the many different escape possibilities gives the player scope for months of varied and interesting play. Unquestionably the best arcade adventure so far this year – don't miss it.**

Going underground . . . in a bid for freedom, the prisoner gets lost in the maze of tunnels below the camp



Under cover of a building, the prisoner crosses the compound

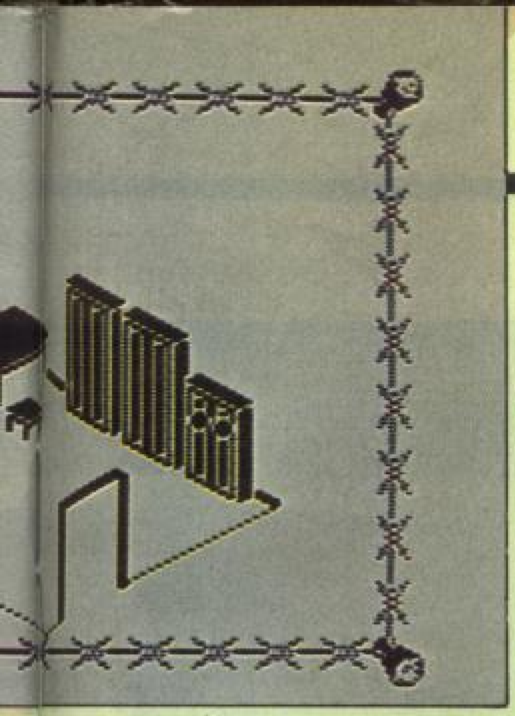




The programmers have made a brave attempt at a large scrolling play area – sadly the scrolling doesn't meet the same high standard as the gameplay. The Great Escape **contains some of the most detailed and attractive graphics I've seen on the Commodore, it just seems a pity that the screen play area is so small. The sound effects do their job admirably, but the game lacks a decent melody to add to the very weak atmosphere. The presentation could have been made stronger, as there's absolutely no front end. Still, all the problems are very logical, fairly simple to solve . . . and great fun.**



Ocean have achieved a very competent conversion from the original Spectrum program, considering that the 64 doesn't really like 3D perspective games. The camp is highly detailed and there are loads of guards and POW's wandering around to add to the atmosphere. A really nice touch is the ability to enter tunnels and scramble around under the ground. My only niggle is the slow speed of action, but this is still faster than most games of this type. If you fancy a bit of WW II action from the other side of the fence, then look no further than The Great Escape.



torches, wire-cutters, shovels and dynamite to name but five.

Abandoning control of the prisoner allows him to follow the strict German routine – useful to bide time while an escape plan is formulated, or to monitor the behaviour of the guards.

The action is displayed through a remote forced 3D perspective, with flick-screen indoor locations and multi-directional scrolling castle grounds. Information displayed at the bottom of the screen comprises a numerical representation of the hero's morale, an alarm bell and a text readout area, which displays German orders. Failing to comply with these orders (roll call, meal times and so on) results in the hero being chased by guards, and a spell in solitary confinement if he's captured. Capture also causes the loss of any collected equipment along with a loss of morale. Should morale sink to zero, the potential escapee becomes an insipid model prisoner like the rest of the inmates – but that's not going to happen, is it?

PRESENTATION 90%
Good instructions, and many highly effective touches throughout, such as being able to let the prisoner do his own thing.

GRAPHICS 81%
The detailed 3D graphics generate a suitable atmosphere, marginally tainted by the juddery scrolling and absence of colour.

SOUND 22%
A few bells and whistles add some atmosphere to an otherwise silent game.

HOOKABILITY 88%
Instantly absorbing and interactive action as soon as the prisoner leaves his bed.

LASTABILITY 88%
A complete POW environment to be monitored, many objects to find and locations to explore – just to find *one* escape route!

VALUE 87%
Weeks of play on offer for nine quid.

OVERALL 89%
One of the best arcade adventures available – an essential purchase for fans of the genre.

THE CURSE OF SHERWOOD

Mastertronic, £1.99 cass, joystick or keys

The peace and tranquility of Sherwood Forest has been shattered by the evil Sagalia and his cult, who have taken over and are ruling the place with terror and fear. In desperation the people of the wood turn for help to Robin Hood and his band of merry men.

To help the do-gooders, the Bishop of Derby has agreed to carry out an exorcism upon the fiend, and Friar Tuck, one of Robin's formidable team, travels to meet him. However, when Tuck reaches the meeting point he discovers the Bishop's corpse, pierced by a black arrow. Attached to its shaft is a parchment fragment, inscribed with a cryptic rhyme which has to be solved if the heart of the wickedness is to be found and finally destroyed.

The player guides the Friar around the flick-screen forest in search of items necessary to banish the diabolical Sagalia from the woody realm, clues to the required objects gleaned from the poem found stuck to the Bishop.



Take Sabre Wulf, Robin Of The Wood **and more recently** Firelord **– if you're into this type of game then you'll be pleased to hear that** Curse of Sherwood **is more of the same, with virtually identical playability and game structure. Although the graphics are poor, there's a large map to explore and plenty of puzzles to solve – and it's cheap! However, if you like a little more variety, or are getting cheesed off with this type of game, then simply avoid it.**

Sagalia's bizarre servants are encountered throughout the quest – these are dangerous creatures, endowed with the ability to steal one of Tuck's five lives at a touch.

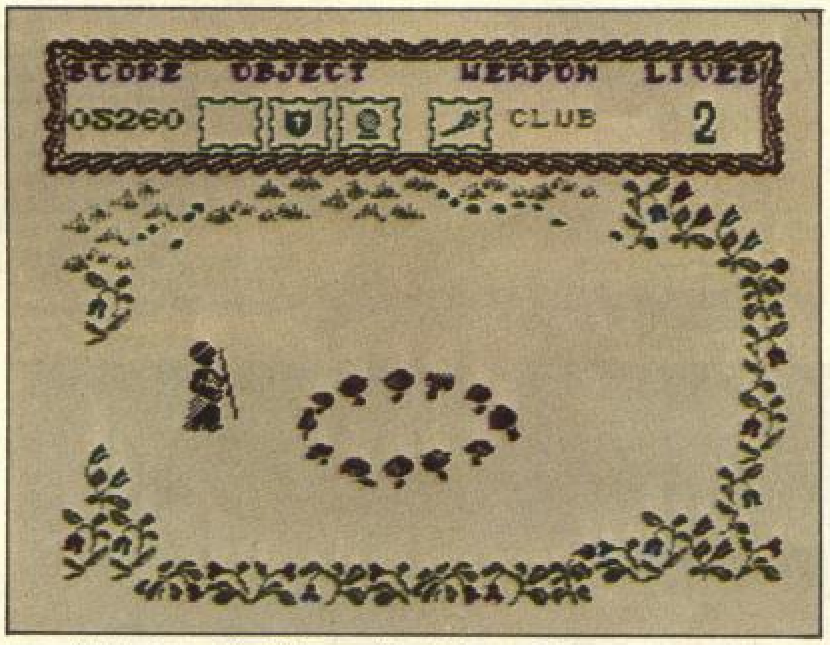
Friar Tuck is armed with a sword with which he can dispatch a beast, but as he kills opponents he can collect and utilise their fallen weapons, the power of each varying on the type of creature it's used on.

Tuck also has the ability to pick up objects which the enemy drop, a carried object being shown at the top of the screen, and these are the key to success. If the correct objects are picked up and dropped in the right places Tuck could well win the day, but it's by no means an easy task.

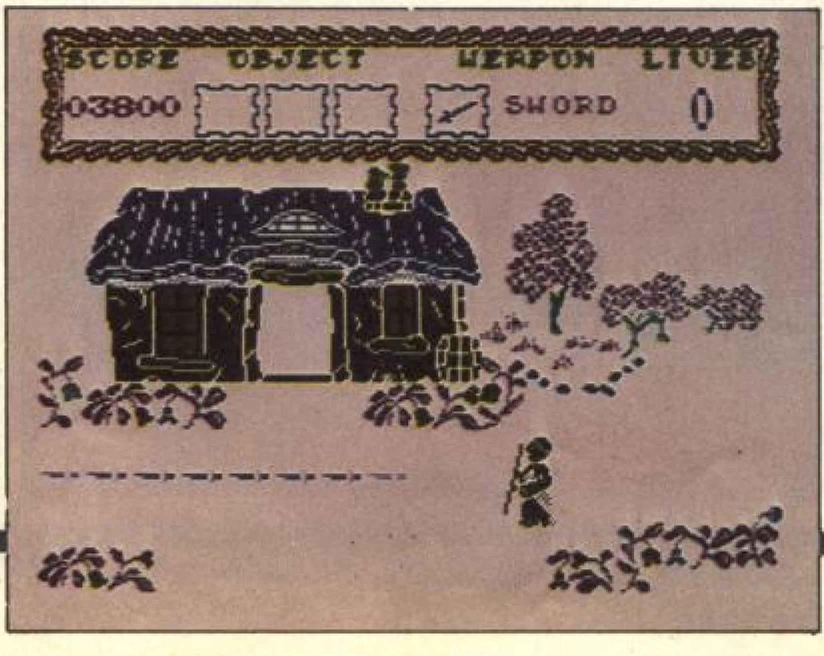


Following the abysmal Con-Quest **comes Derek Brewster's latest, and far superior game,** The Curse Of Sherwood. **We are again treated to Spectrum-like graphics, but they're adequate and don't really detract from the gameplay, which is actually quite captivating. The puzzles are logical, involving a nice blend of exploring and blasting. Unfortunately the program isn't intelligent enough to remember how many creatures you have despatched on a screen, so if you kill three out of four, leave the screen and re-enter, there will again be four creatures blocking your way. Although annoying, this is its only real fault and at two pounds, you can't really go too far wrong.**

▼ Entering the toadstool ring teleports Friar Tuck to another part of the forest



▼ Having despatched the guardian skeletons, Tuck can enter and explore the cottage



PRESENTATION 58%
Nothing outstanding – joystick and keyboard option and reasonable in-game presentation.

GRAPHICS 31%
Feeble single colour sprites move around a series of equally bland screens.

SOUND 3%
A few forlorn white noises are all SID mutters.

HOOKABILITY 56%
Initial exploring fun and reward.

LASTABILITY 51%
Enough to keep a die-hard fan happy, but others less enthusiastic will quickly tire.

VALUE 57%
Reasonable, but nothing new or outstanding on offer.

OVERALL 43%
Barely adequate fodder for an avid arcade adventurer.

ZZAP! TEST

EAGLES

Hewson, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only

In the early half of the 29th Century, man has finally become civilised: he still fights wars, but now genetically engineered beings to do all the dirty work.

In the continuing 300 year war against an alien force, Earth's prime assault weapon is the 'Eagle' fighter – manned by genetic pilots and dealing death with absolute precision.

As another fleet of alien attackers homes in for the kill, your squadron is called in to action. Flying in pairs, both craft are displayed at once against split-screen scrolling backdrops, with the option to either play solo, or with another person as a team or in competition.

Your aim is to annihilate the attacking aliens, and also to collect the alien Messenger Droids – small glowing spheres containing vital enemy communications. Flying into a droid stores it aboard your vessel until you pass over the collection chute, where it is dropped into a pipe for delivery to your own forces.



This fast, smooth scrolling, split-screen shoot 'em up for one or two players would be great fun – if it wasn't for the ludicrously small playing area. The main sprites are far too large, but even if they were smaller it wouldn't make Eagles **any more playable, as the action is a little too slow and monotonous for my liking.** Eagles **looks good, and to all intents and purposes it could have been a sort of two-player split-screen version of** Dropzone **– but sadly it isn't, and the effort seems wasted.**



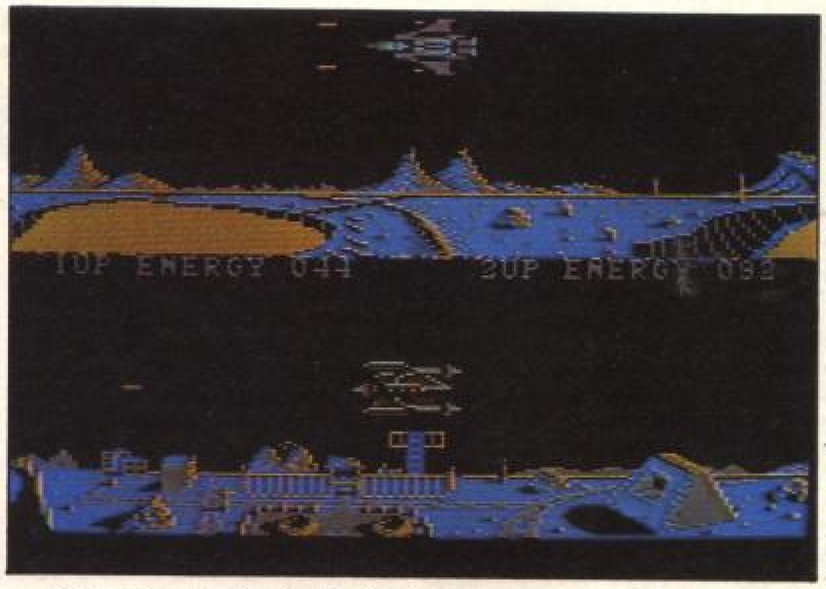
The trouble with this is that the sprites are far too large. There's simply no room to manoeuvre – it takes an entire screen length to turn, and consequently it's very difficult to avoid enemy fire. If the planes were smaller then there'd be a feeling of freedom, rather than the confinement and frustration which are experienced during play. The action is a mite repetitive too – there's little to do other than fly around, pick up a pod, drop it off, fly around . . . It's a shame really, the game has got real potential which sadly hasn't been realised.

When five droids have been collected, a Devestator device becomes available for addition to your armoury. Once activated, this destroys all aliens in your vicinity.

At the end of an attack wave, you are called upon to confront the main Zeta fighter – a computer controlled interceptor craft of awesome firepower. Only when this has been disabled (that is, blown to atoms) does the next wave of aliens appear – more ferocious and devious than ever.

When destroyed, these later alien vessels transmute into different craft, becoming increasingly dangerous and difficult to hit. Fireballs appear on later levels – unaffected by the Devestator device, a number of hits is required to ensure their capitulation.

Your ship is destroyed on collision with alien fire, and you have three ships with which to battle the enemy.



▲ Player One at the top tackles the alien command ship in the bonus screen



The single player option is not exactly enthralling, and the two players on screen option does little to redeem the situation. There is no feeling of playing as a team since there is minimal interaction between the two. The actions of one player do not really affect the other to any great extent. A more cosmetic point is the ludicrously large main sprites, which look huge against the small playing area. This makes the game look cluttered and spoils the whole split-screen effect. A technically slick shoot 'em up, which looks special at first, but is disappointing to play shortly thereafter.

▼ Both jets zoom across the barren landscape as they battle the tiny alien craft



PRESENTATION 67%
Several options but little else.

GRAPHICS 74%
Smooth split-screen scrolling, well drawn but poorly coloured backdrops, simplistic aliens and reasonable fighter planes.

SOUND 66%
Decent spot effects and a melancholy title tune.

HOOKABILITY 63%
Visually inviting but not so addictive.

LASTABILITY 39%
Monotonous blasting action fails to entertain for long – even with two players.

VALUE 43%
Not much excitement on offer for nine quid.

OVERALL 47%
An ineffective one or two player game, spoiled by cosmetic imperfections and limited gameplay.

SAMURAI TRILOGY

Gremlin Graphics, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick or keys

Deep in the heart of China lives a group of elite Warlords, masters of armed and unarmed combat. Every year they select a small number of students to join their ranks, but each one has to prove himself worthy of the position by showing proficiency in the three fighting arts: Kendo, Karate and Samurai.

This year you have been skilled enough to merit a place in the training program, and now have your chance to impress the warriors by beating the expert opponents they pit against you.

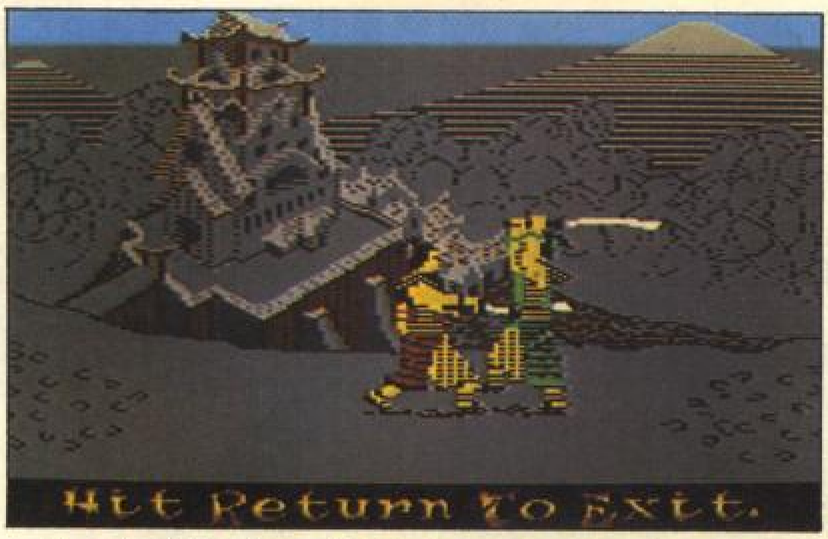
The *Samurai Trilogy* is spread across four independently loaded sections. Initially, the expansive credits and title screen options appear, offering a selection of languages and a choice of skill practices. Next comes the chance to load a previously saved game, and finally one of the three fighting skills is chosen.

Another series of options is presented prior to combat. One opponent is chosen from a list of ten, with his background story displayed. Next comes a fight strategy selection, where a choice is made between Skill, Speed, Stamina and Strength. The final choice relates to pre-fight training – five points are allocated to the four fight strategies for both attack and defence.

At all three skill levels the player is capable of 16 different moves, accessed by combinations of joystick movements in conjunction with presses of the fire button.

The bottom of the screen contains five diminishing bars, four representing the fighters' inner and outer strengths, and the fifth acting as a timer. The objective is to hit your opponent enough times to reduce his bar to a fatal zero. If this isn't done within the allotted time the bout is judged on points, with the highest scorer declared the winner.

Having won a fight, the player chooses another opponent and new options are chosen. The current situation can also be saved for future use if so desired. When enough opponents have been defeated the player returns to the title screen and another skill is loaded.



▲ The end of his training reached, the aspiring Samurai warrior takes up his sword in an attempt to prove his worth



As fighting games go, this is one of the worst. The multi-load is a greedy time consumer, and having to endure the options time and time again is a chore. I never felt any feeling of excitement, mostly due to the unrealistic and jerky sprite movements and the overcomplicated and illogical use of the joystick. Another detraction is that there never seems to be any contact between the fighters – they just float past one another, even when contact is made. The strength bar may shrink a bit, but there's no satisfying thud or opponent reaction as fist hits flesh – something that makes a beat 'em up worth playing.



This is more like a quiz composed of a series of multiple choice questions than a fighting game – there are so many superfluous options. What's even more annoying though, is the fact that when the almost eternal selection of options has been completed, the actual game is awkward, boring and mostly unplayable. The backdrops have potential, but the characters are too effeminate and move badly. It never feels like you're involved in combat, just an elaborate oriental dance. Perhaps the programmers got carried away with the glossy presentation, and ran out of room for a decent fighting game – the potential was certainly there, especially with the Kendo and Samurai sections.



Yet another combat game – and this one is *awful*. Considering the effort that has obviously gone into Samurai Trilogy, **the final product is hardly worth it. It's ill conceived and badly implemented, being simplistic in concept and still unnecessarily complex. The constant interruption of the tactical decision sections are very annoying and hardly seem to make any difference to the outcome of a battle, which, in many cases, can be won by repeating the same manoeuvre over and over again. Whoever designed the sprites has little concept of movement (or anatomy for that matter), and the backdrops are equally bad.**

▼ People in paper houses shouldn't throw sticks . . . the Kendo section takes place in a typical oriental semi



PRESENTATION 51%
The laborious multi-load and overcomplicated options are difficult and mostly unnecessary.

GRAPHICS 32%
Badly animated and unrealistic sprites fight across a series of unprofessional backdrops.

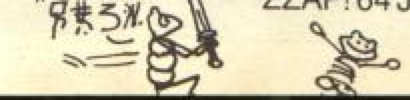
SOUND 77%
A pleasant oriental tune plays throughout, but doesn't add sufficient atmosphere.

HOOKABILITY 37%
The awkward controls, multi-load and general presentation are offputting from the start.

LASTABILITY 28%
What little variety and action there is, is completely ruined by the execution.

VALUE 25%
Grossly overpriced as it lacks any entertaining qualities and is cumbersome to use.

OVERALL 29%
A very poor fighting game which offers little action and variety.



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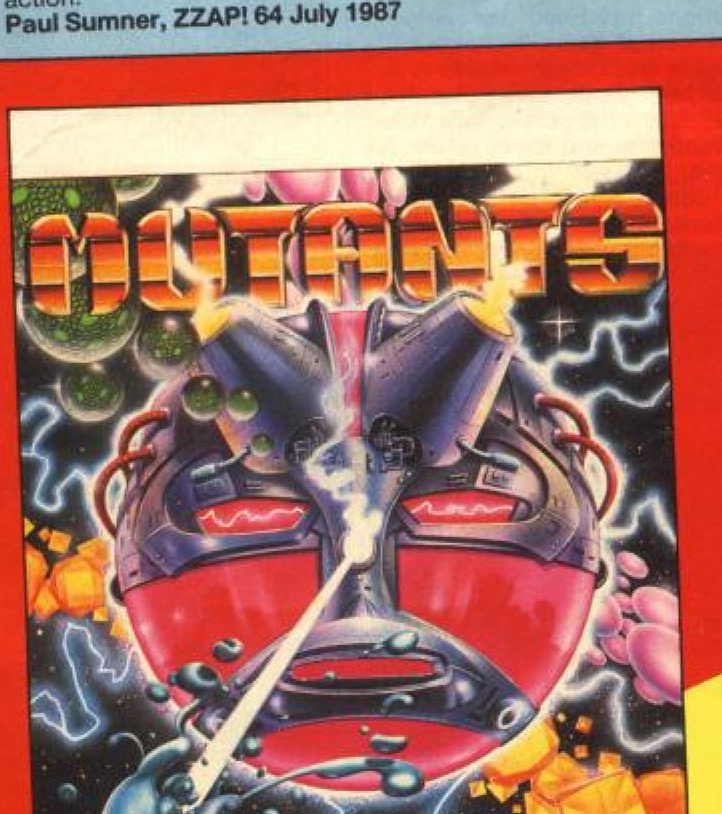
ARMY MOVES

A frustrating but competent mixture of game styles spread across eight sections. For more details, see the review on page 34.
" . . . an entertaining mixture of three different types of blasting action."
Paul Sumner, ZZAP! 64 July 1987



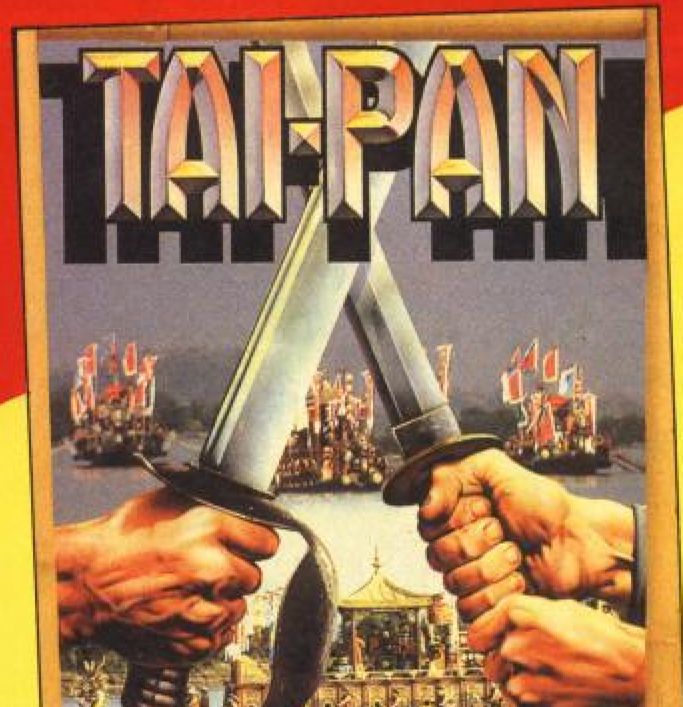
HEAD OVER HEELS

From the author of the Spectrum classic *Batman* (which sadly never made it to the 64) comes one of the most entertaining isometric perspective puzzle games yet. Can our two heroes find their way about the five zany worlds without being caught by the vicious marmite, the propeller driven meanies or the disappearing hush puppies? Enlist the help of Prince Charles Daleks, Reincarnation Fish and a multitude of Fluffy Rabbits to find the missing Crowns and defeat the Evil Emperor. Proved a major success on all other formats and should do the same on the Commodore.



MUTANTS

Denton Designs returned with a vengeance earlier this year with this unusual and immensely playable shoot 'em up, featuring gorgeous graphics, slick sound and plenty of fast action to match. Know your enemy!
"An essential purchase – miss it and you're missing something special."
Julian Rignall, ZZAP! 64 March 1987



TAI-PAN

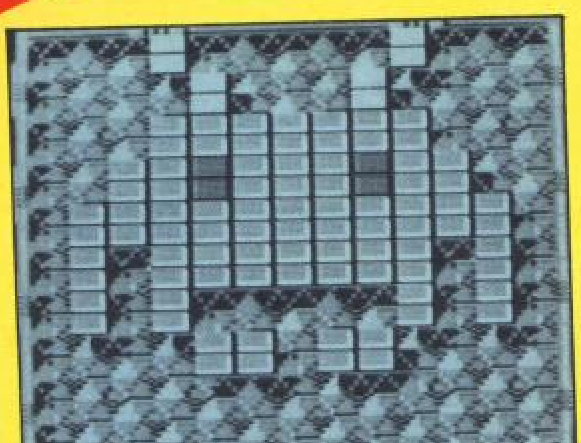
Take to the high seas in this unusual blend of arcade, adventure and strategy action, based on James Clavell's best selling novel of the same name. Press-gang a crew, indulge in a little smuggling for extra profit, improve your status, fight for survival – live the novel!

...BSCRIPTION TO ZZAP! 64



WIZBALL

Bizarre but highly addictive arcade action from Sensible Software. Take control of the Wiz and his cat, Nifta, and attempt to restore the colour to Wizworld. For more details, see the Sizzling review on page 14.
" . . . simply brilliant – one of the best-presented, most graphically and aurally attractive and addictive pieces of software available."
Gary Penn, ZZAP! 64 July 1987



ARKANOID

Undoubtedly one of the classiest, most addictive and playable arcade conversions to date – the definitive version of that old favourite *Breakout*, for either one or two players. Battle through 32 screens of devious brick arrangements, collecting and utilising extra features along the way, before facing the ultimate challenge . . .
" . . . extremely playable, incredibly frustrating, wonderfully frenetic and immensely addictive."
Julian Rignall, ZZAP! 64 April 1987

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Three months back rent. Four more days and I'm out on my ear.
FINAL DEMAND
PROBLEM!
What a crap arcade conversion. Why don't I ever get a chance at jobs like this?
It's a brilliant concept but there's not time to have it ready for next week what with everything else. Another smash hit I've lost out on!
PROBLEM!
PROBLEM!
This is the fourth month running that you've told me there's a cheque in the post!!!!
PROBLEM!
I can't believe it, this is a rip off of my game the ba*****!!! told me they weren't interested in.
COMPUTER NEWS
PROBLEM!
Just what did you hire me for if it wasn't my programming ability – a number crunching robot.
WHAT IS THE PROGRAMMERS
SOLUTION?

Update:
Reawakened after two years of 'death', a confused Cross stumbles into a jungle and some of its inhabitants – some more dangerous than others . . .

THE TERMINAL MAN




ONLY THE TORRENTIAL RAIN AND THE THUNDER REMAINED AS CROSS READ THE CIRCUITRY IN THE MACHINE...
A GUARDIAN MECHANOID...
-ONE OF MANY-
-PROTECTING INSTALLATION OF VITAL IMPORTANCE...
-A COORDINATED MOVE OUTWARDS FROM ITS CENTRE ON A CYCLE OF EIGHTY YEARS...
-AND THE TECHNOLOGY IS OF THE SAME DESIGN AS THE ONE THAT CREATED THE LONG DEAD STARSHIPS I FOUND BEFORE MY SHUTDOWN!
ANCIENT PLANS OF WHICH THIS MECHANOID KNOWS NOTHING BUT GUARD DUTIES...
IK-IK PHEE!
CURIOSITY GAVE WAY TO PRESENT PREDICAMENTS-
-RELEASE THE GIRL-AND PERMANENTLY INACTIVATE THE MACHINE-
AFTER DANGER CAME WEARINESS...
WHAT NOW? I KNOW MY PAST-I KNOW I AM THREE-AND YET ONE. I HAD A TASK ONCE-IT WAS DONE AND THE COMPUTER IN ME TELLS ME THAT IS ALL THERE IS TO IT. YET, THE HUMAN SEEKS NEW GOALS AND THE VIRUS WILL NOT DIE... I AM TORN.
NNNG-RZ!
-THESE BEINGS NEEDED ME FOR A MOMENT-THAT WAS REASON ENOUGH TO BE, BUT WHAT OF THE FUTURE?
LEAVES RUSTLED AND SUDDENLY THE PRESENT WAS BACK!
DO NOT RESIST, STRANGER! YOU ARE SURROUNDED!
YOU SAVED OUR YOUNG-BUT THEY ARE NEEDED NOW-THE SEARING IS UPON US-AND THEN THE GIVING
TAKE THEM TO THE SETTLING!


LISTLESS AND PASSIVE, CROSS ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE LED OFF WITH THE GROUP— AND AS THE RAIN STOPPED THEY REACHED THE SETTLING...
HUGE!
CROSS GAZED AT THE STRUCTURE— THE COMPUTER SIDE OF HIM COMING TO CONCLUSIONS...
THE INSTALLATION- ANCIENT AND DESTROYED- STABILISER 3, PLANET 785- ALL THE MECHANOID KNEW...
AS THE CLOUD BROKE, THE FULL GLORY OF THE PLANETARY SYSTEM HUNG ABOVE HIM...
THE DYSON SYSTEM - ARTIFICIAL ASSEMBLY OF PLANETS IN A SPHERE ENCIRCLING THE SUN...
-ALL HELD IN POSITION BY A VAST NETWORK OF STABILIZERS LIKE THIS -LINKED TO WHAT?
-AND WHAT WENT WRONG?
STRANGER- THE ELDERS WILL SPEAK TO YOU AND THE YOUNG ONES!
COME!



BY OLIVER FREY **Next Month: Fire from Heaven**

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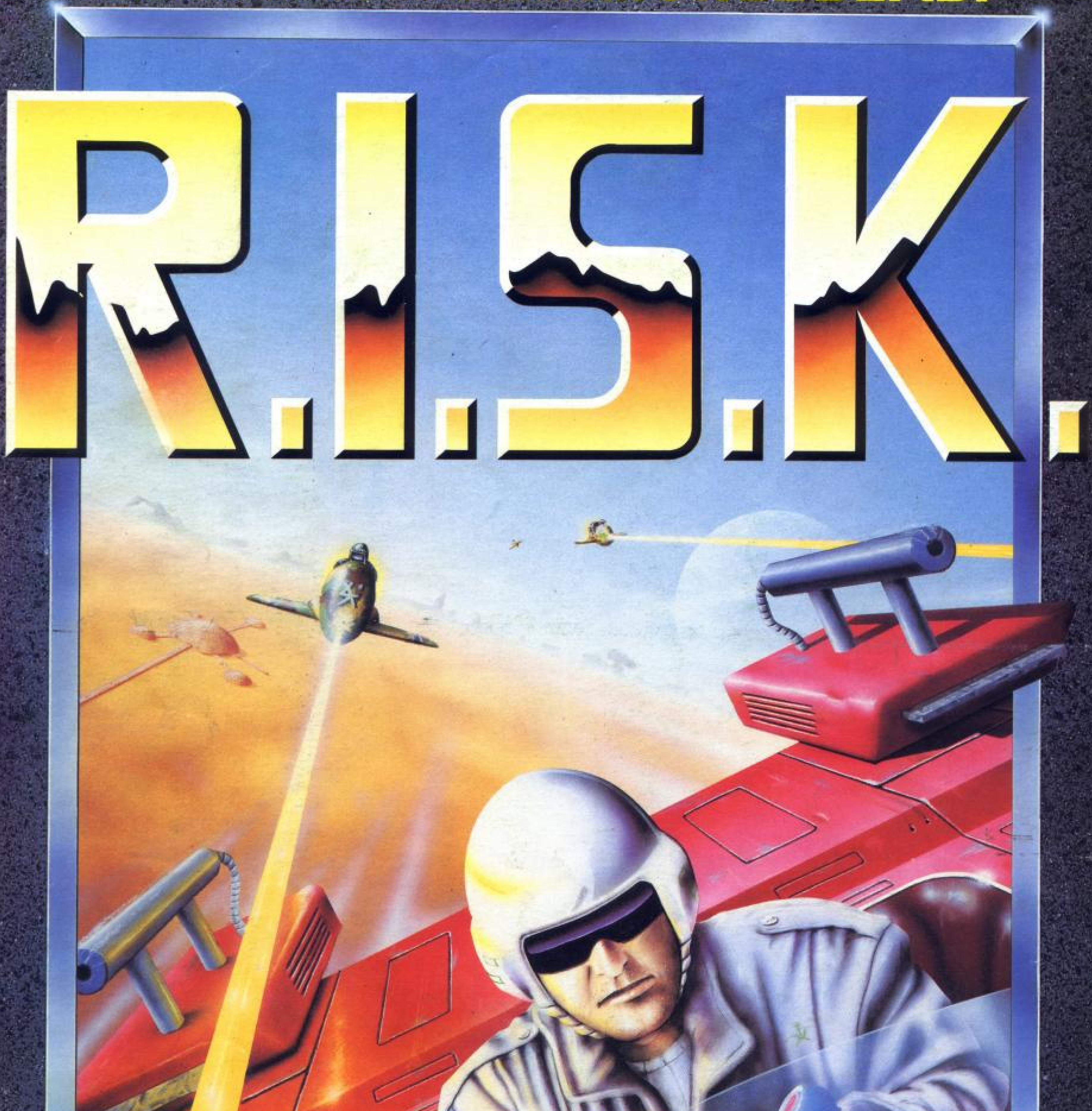
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